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# Thucydides' Account of the Athenian Empire in the Light of Contemporary Coinage

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THUCYDIDES' ACCOUNT OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE  
IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY COINAGE

by

John Anthony Brinkman, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
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## LIFE

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## CHAPTER I

### THE MORALITY OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE ACCORDING TO THUCYDIDES

ἡμῖν γὰρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνυται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς  
ἀνέρος, εὖτ' ἂν μιν κατὰ δοῦλιον ἡμᾶρ ἔλθῃν.

--Odyssey, 17, 322-323.

When the Greek world emerged from its dark ages about the middle of the eighth century before Christ, she was dotted with many small city states up and down her coasts and in the interior lands surrounding the Aegean. The sun of those widely ruling monarchs whose heroic deeds Homer had sung had already set beneath the political horizon. A myriad of tiny independent polities had risen in its place and would dominate the historical scene for some centuries to come.

Despite their insignificant size, these political bodies managed to produce one of the truly great civilizations of the human race. With their intense military and commercial rivalry, they planted colonies from one end of the known world to the other--from Sinope on the Euxine to Selinus in Sicily. And, though they were continually at war with one another, still they provided within their midst a spawning ground for some of the finest artists, writers, and thinkers of all time--men like Plato, Phidias, Pindar, Herodotus, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Demosthenes,

Polygnotus, Aristophanes, Socrates, and Thucydides.

One dominant note runs throughout these centuries of Greek greatness: the jealously guarded ἐλευθερία, which we frequently translate "freedom." This was the distinctive trait of the city state and of its people. As an ideal, it inspired the polity to assert its own independent claim to greatness and inspired the individual citizens to reach out for an acme of culture in all fields. And later, when Greek ingenuity was becoming exhausted, it would serve as the tragic flaw that would destroy their civilization through improvident internal dissension. But now, in the fifth century, the era with which we shall be concerned, ἐλευθερία expressed in one word the spirit of the times.

It is important for us, then, if we wish to understand the temperament of this Greek people, that we know precisely what their traditional spirit embodied. The word ἐλευθερία, as we have remarked, can be translated briefly as "freedom" or "independence." But it meant much more to the Greeks. It embraced not merely the concept of political autonomy, though this was an important factor in itself. Nor did it necessarily signify that a citizen governed himself by a more or less democratic form of government. Rather it meant that in the way the city state was governed--whether oligarchy, tyranny, or democracy--the rights of the individual were respected. Each man was a full-fledged member of his state,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Not all adult males, of course, were citizens in the individual states, but only those who possessed the proper birth and property qualifications.



not just a subject or slave of the polity. Thus *ἐλευθερία* included both the international autonomy or external relations of a state and the domestic policy, where arbitrary government was excluded in favor of a polity ruled by laws respecting the dignity of each citizen. Hence in one all-embracing spirit were found both a stimulant for and a satisfaction of man's higher instincts and capabilities--in freedom of opportunity and in respect for the achievements of the individual, both in the case of states and men.<sup>2</sup>

This tradition of *ἐλευθερία* was firmly embedded in the minds and hearts of the Greek people. To preserve it and all that it stood for, they had fought numerous wars against domestic despots and against other city states which had sought to encroach on their liberties. In the opening years of the fifth century, when the barbarian armies from Persia had overrun their land, the Greek people had stood together to ward off the dread menace of *δουλεία*, which was threatening to engulf the whole of Hellas.<sup>3</sup> Forgetting

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<sup>2</sup>Sources on the Greek tradition of *ἐλευθερία* are John Bagnell Bury, A History of Greece (3rd ed.; London, 1951), pp. 341-342; Herbert Newell Couch, Classical Civilization: Greece (2nd ed.; New York, 1951), p. 239; H. D. F. Kitto, The Greeks (Hammondsworth, 1951), pp. 10-12, 64-78; Benjamin Dean Meritt, H. T. Wade-Gery, Malcolm Francis McGregor, The Athenian Tribute Lists, III (Princeton, 1950), 155-159; Jacqueline de Romilly, Thucydide et l'Impérialisme Athénien (2nd ed.; Paris, 1951), pp. 71-75.

<sup>3</sup>*Δουλεία*, which is usually translated as "slavery" or "enslavement," is generally considered as the opposite of *ἐλευθερία*. Confer Meritt, The Athenian Tribute Lists, in the place cited above, especially page 156.

their individual differences in the face of a threat to their dearly prized freedom, they had battled the foreign invader in unison.

Against the background of this weighty tradition, Athens arose a few years later and enslaved over half the Greek world. Transforming the original naval confederacy of Delos into an Athenian Empire,<sup>4</sup> she acted contrary to all that had been held sacred in Hellas up to that time. Righteous indignation was poured forth in abundance by the freedom-loving Greeks against this moral abomination; and, to relieve the oppressed states, an international war was inaugurated which would drag on for twenty-seven years.

To Thucydides, the supposedly objective historian of the Athenian Empire, this contradiction cried for a solution: how could any sincerely religious Greek people rise to success by enslaving their fellow Hellenes? To reconcile this seeming disparity, he returned to the question of a moral justification for the Athenian Empire several times during his narrative.<sup>5</sup> But he did not push his inquiry openly or in his own name, because his

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<sup>4</sup>Our present notion of empire was perhaps too refined for the ancient Greek. 'Αρχή was the term employed to designate the Athenian power. Its real meaning can be ascertained if we advert to the fact that it was the active concept corresponding to the passive δουλεία and hence took away ἐλευθερία. Confer de Romilly, *ibid.*, 19-20.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., I, 75-77; II, 60-64; V, 85-111; VI, 82-87, to mention a few of the more prominent places.

work was supposed to be a strict chronological retailing of events. Rather he pursued his investigations through his characters, letting their various speeches speak for him--the Spartans and their allies as the prosecutors, the Athenians as the defendants. This method for proposing the arguments for both sides has left us, throughout the books of Thucydides, moral accusations and apologies in abundance; but it has also left us wondering what the personal opinions of Thucydides were in the matter. ~~1~~

This limitation, namely our not being able to assign any statements definitely to Thucydides on the morality of the Athenian Empire, forces us to proceed to our goal in this thesis in a roundabout way. In our treatment of Thucydidean passages where a justification for the Empire is attempted, we must carefully distinguish between Thucydides and the Athenian side as presented by--and not necessarily subscribed to by--Thucydides. What will this distinction mean practically in our present consideration? Simply that we must be content at first with skimming the surface of the text, confining ourselves to the Athenian observations on the morality of their empire. Later, when we have fully grasped the import of the Athenian position, we can attempt to determine whether or not the position is also Thucydides'.

Therefore, keeping in mind the dominant tradition of *ελευθερία* in the fifth century and the peculiar, recondite condition of the historian in the present context, let us commence our study of the morality of that contradiction which history has

labelled the Athenian Empire. Perhaps the most concise statement on behalf of Athens is contained in the first book of Thucydides, beginning in chapter seventy-five. Here some Athenian citizens, who happened to be in Sparta on business in 432 when the chief council of the Lacedaemonians was debating whether or not to declare war against Athens, sum up in brief compass their apologia for their empire:

. . . do we deserve to be regarded with this excessive jealousy by the Hellenes just on account of the empire we possess? And indeed we did not acquire this empire by force, but only after you had refused to continue to oppose what was left of the barbarian forces, and the allies came to us and of their own accord asked us to assume the leadership. It was under the compulsion of circumstances that we were driven to advance our empire to its present state, influenced chiefly by fear, then by honor also, and lastly by self-interest as well; and after we had once incurred the hatred of most of our allies, and several of them had already revolted and been reduced to subjection, and when you were no longer friendly as before but suspicious and at variance with us, it no longer seemed safe to risk relaxing our hold. For all seceders would have gone over to you. And no man is to be blamed for making the most of his advantages when it is a question of the gravest dangers.<sup>6</sup>

This short, blunt paragraph is the Athenian case. Other passages may introduce ramifications of the ideas here expressed, but they add nothing to the essential simplicity of this argument. We shall rely on it for our point of departure, bringing in other texts only where necessary to clarify expressions not fully developed.

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<sup>6</sup>I, 75, 1-5. The translation of Thucydides used throughout this thesis will be that of Charles Forster Smith from the Loeb series.

This justification falls easily into a threefold division, based on chronological as well as logical considerations. At its inception, the Athenian Empire was not acquired by force; but the allies of Athens freely and of their own accord asked her to assume control of the naval confederacy at Delos. Secondly, although this confederacy was at the time a far cry from the later Empire, yet the gradual transition from confederacy to Empire was effected only under compulsion of circumstances. Hence the Athenians incurred no guilt in this transitional stage. And then, finally, when Athens was faced with the harsh reality of the Empire in its full vigor, it was no longer safe for her to relax her grip--this would have been political suicide. Thus the Athenians, through no fault of their own, had come into the possession of this moral monster.<sup>7</sup>

The first of the excuses proffered by the Athenians, namely that the original command of the Delian confederacy was not secured by force, is a fact of history, valid as far as it goes. But its direct bearing on the case is minimal. The allies submitted to a confederacy on equal terms, not relinquishing their sovereignty in the least--all of this in complete accord with

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<sup>7</sup> It is noteworthy that the Athenians in the course of the book never attempt to claim that their empire is entirely just. Pericles himself admits to the Athenians that "the empire you hold is a tyranny" (II, 63, 2). Rather their efforts to justify their actions are always in terms of circumstances, not the deeds themselves.

their traditional ἐλευθερία. No one would claim that the initial stage of what was later to prove the Empire was unjust; and Athens is by her first assertion simply beginning on the right foot rhetorically by stating an obvious fact with which her audience will undoubtedly agree. Thus this excuse in itself does not amount to a moral justification of the Athenian Empire, but merely to a re-assertion of the original innocuous nature of the power held by the Athenians.

The next point of the Athenian defense, namely the transition from confederacy to empire because of the press of circumstances, would seem to be the crux of the question. For here, in the gradual evolution to imperial power, the rights of the allies began to be infringed upon and ἐλευθερία in its true political significance to be rejected. If the Athenians were actually forced [κατηναγκάσθημεν] to take this course of action, then any claims of immorality could hardly be proved against them. But, if they were not strictly forced into these actions, their apologia becomes invalid; and they stand convicted as impious. The point on which their whole case rests is the necessity of circumstances. If such necessity was really present and only if it was really present, can their mode of conduct be justified.

The third point of the apologia is fundamentally a post-factum argument: given the Athenian Empire, what can we do with it? Again a form of necessity, here the need for self-preservation steps in and dictates that the ἀρχή be held onto. It is now too

dangerous to let go. This would allow former subjects to release their pent-up hatred against the Athenians; and Athens, deprived of her former armor, would be surrounded on all sides by enemies eager to taste her blood.

The force of this final point also rests on the evidence of circumstances. Everyone listening to the Athenian envoys would be willing to concede that this third point, like the first one, is undeniably true. Athens was sitting on a powder keg and could not afford to get off. Hence, from the Athenian point of view at least, necessity was once again forcing their hand. They had no desire to run roughshod over the moral traditions of their people, but they had no choice.

And so the Athenian case seems to hang together rather solidly. Charges of immorality are hemmed in on all sides by the blank wall of necessity. And this necessity, in at least the first and third points of the Athenian apologia, is supported by incontestable evidence.

But, as Thucydides himself realized, this case is not on so firm a foundation as may appear at first glance. When one inspects somewhat more closely the nature of the necessity adduced as excusing, the moral validity of the Athenian justification begins to topple. Let us take another look at the exact wording of some portions of the above-quoted speech to the Spartan council:

It was under the compulsion of circumstances that we

were driven to advance our empire to its present state, influenced chiefly by fear, then by honor also, and lastly by self-interest as well; and after we had once incurred the hatred of most of our allies . . . it no longer seemed safe to risk relaxing our hold . . . . And no man is to be blamed for making the most of his advantages when it is a question of the gravest dangers.<sup>8</sup>

Are the Athenians here talking of necessity or of expediency? It would seem from their very words--honor, self-interest, advantages--that a large part of what they are calling necessity is in fact simply pragmatic necessity or expediency. Thus it would appear that the Athenians were not forced in the strict sense of the term, but rather swayed by considerations of gain and loss, as they themselves here seem to admit. Hence their necessity is not what we would call true moral necessity, and their attempt to justify their actions is to this extent based upon an unsolid foundation.

At this point in our argument, however, a whole new area in Thucydides is opened to view. For, in the pages of his history, we find not just facts and not just a thinly veiled apologia for the Empire, but also a complete new scheme of morality on which the justification can be based. Once again, we cannot positively state that Thucydides personally held this new morality, but only that he puts its principles into the mouths of the spokesmen for the Athenians. On the basis of this new morality, the necessities or expediences mentioned above become valid apologies for the

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<sup>8</sup>I, 75, 3-5.



rectitude of the ἀρετή.

Though this thesis is not primarily philosophical in character, it will be helpful to consider quite briefly what the Thucydidean or rather Athenian tenets of morality were. First of all, the foundation stone of the new morality was human nature: not human nature as it ought to be, but human nature as it is. Thus the strong natural motives inherent in the human being were canonized and morality put on a positivist foundation. Thus, when the Athenians built up their Empire because of fear, honor, and gain, they were but yielding to the universal necessity of this human nature: χρηνόμενοι τῇ ἀνθρωπείῳ φύσει.<sup>9</sup> And they were blameless in such action because "nothing is remarkable or inconsistent with human nature in what we have done."<sup>10</sup>

The cardinal principles of this existential human nature seem to have been: "no man is to be blamed for making the most of his advantages when there is a question of the gravest dangers"<sup>11</sup> and "it is always the established rule that the weaker is kept down by the stronger."<sup>12</sup> Thus we find the Athenians in 416 exhorting the Melians not to urge the old hypocritical claims of

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<sup>9</sup>I, 76, 3.

<sup>10</sup>I, 76, 2.

<sup>11</sup>I, 75, 5.

<sup>12</sup>I, 76, 2.

morality and justice<sup>13</sup>--"which no one, when opportunity offered of securing something by main strength, ever yet put before force and abstained from taking advantage."<sup>14</sup> The Athenians wanted to base their mores on more realistic considerations.<sup>15</sup>

It is not the aim of this thesis to refute the philosophical foundation of this argument. But it has been necessary to see why we can term the Athenian apologia a moral justification in the true sense. Granted the revised conception of moral necessity, the Athenian defense can become valid in the moral order. We shall prescind, therefore, from any philosophical discussion of its positivist basis and ask: is it valid in the moral order?

By posing our question in this way, we pass from the philosophical realm to that of historical and literary fact. Was there present in the concrete circumstances surrounding the development of the Athenian Empire from the naval confederacy at Delos a

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<sup>13</sup>v, 89-90.

<sup>14</sup>I, 76, 2.

<sup>15</sup>This moral theory is not deduced from isolated instances in the text. Many passages besides I, 75-77 and the others cited express similar opinions--e.g., III, 45 and 82-85; IV, 61; V, 85-111; VI, 82-87. Confer also Paul Shorey, "On the Implicit Ethics and Psychology of Thucydides," Transactions of the American Philological Association, XXIV (1893), 66-88, although this article seems in places to overstep the limits of the evidence and also assigns opinions directly to Thucydides which should be more properly referred to his characters. To see how accurately Thucydides describes the current moral standards of much of Athens, confer Paul F. Conen, S.J., The Ultimate Norm of Morality in the Tragedies of Sophocles, (Unpublished Master's Thesis; Loyola University, Chicago, 1954), especially Chapter II, pp. 7-25.

necessity which forced the Athenians to take the course of action that they did? Or was this necessity merely a product of the mind of the Athenian Thucydides, who has gilded his narrative--as Cornford and others charge--omitting certain facts to establish his thesis of necessity and, as a consequence, the actual validity of the moral justification?

This, then, is the problem of our thesis. Is the Thucydidean apologia for the Athenian Empire valid in the light of history? Was necessity such as he portrays really present in the adjacent circumstances; or did he exercise his critical judgment to avoid mentioning embarrassing events which would dislodge his preconceived conclusion? In other words, is Thucydides good history in this connection; or was he indulging in a literary fantasy and shaping the facts to soothe the downhearted Athenians after the fall of their city?<sup>16</sup>

We will have no little difficulty in answering this question. Almost all succeeding historians of this period have utilized

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<sup>16</sup>That the historian wrote after 404 B.C. and the fall of Athens is attested to by his words in V, 26, 1, where he refers to the twenty-seven year duration of the Peloponnesian War.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following works for helping me to formulate the problem of this thesis: Francis MacDonald Cornford, Thucydides Mythistoricus (London, 1907); David Grene, Man in His Pride (Chicago, 1950), especially pp. 3-69; de Romilly, Ibid.; Maurice Hutton, "Thucydides and History," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 3rd Series, X (1916), Section II, 225-246.

Thucydides as their chief source. Hence they could hardly be expected to serve as criteria for his objectivity. And, unfortunately, the work of Thucydides is the only literary historical record of the times in question.<sup>17</sup> Hence, to verify Thucydides' objectivity on the matter of the Athenian Empire, we must turn to some other non-literary historical source.

For this source, I have chosen the Greek coinage of the period, issued by the various cities subject to imperial Athens. The science of numismatics has proved peculiarly valuable in other instances for giving continuous, unbiased insights into the history of a people.<sup>18</sup> The emblems on the coins can tell us something of the ruling class in the state at the time; the monetary standard employed in striking the metal pieces can reveal something of the commercial relations of the city; and even a lacuna in a well-authenticated series can sometimes indicate to the ob-

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<sup>17</sup>Namely 480-411. There are, of course, certain chroniclers (confer Felix Jacoby, Atthis; Oxford, 1949) and also a slight overlapping in the accounts of Herodotus and of Xenophon, not to mention occasional hints by Aristophanes, but nothing continuous or sustained. Plutarch, who also treats of many of these years in his Lives, relies heavily, but not completely, upon the Thucydidean text.

<sup>18</sup>Scholars have been greatly indebted to the work of Seltman, who revolutionized our knowledge of Athenian history from the years 594-561 a few decades ago through his tireless research with coins. There are also other examples of history being aided through numismatics; among the more recent of these might be included the work of May on the coins of Aenos and that of Head on the earliest coins of Boeotia. We will have occasion later in the thesis to refer to these latter works in our discussion of the history of these areas.

server a temporary loss of sovereignty or some similar political calamity. Thus I hope the numismatics may be able to throw some light on our present subject, namely the necessity attendant on the formation and continuance of the Athenian Empire.

Coins and financial records, of course, cannot tell us the whole story. But the continuous and faithful accounts that they have left us in many instances point up an objective historical narrative to which we can compare Thucydides for conformity. For example, if we can glean from this archaeological source certain salient historical facts which Thucydides should have known and should have incorporated into his history, then we may legitimately ask why he made such an omission--especially if the facts in question might have some bearing on the justification of the Athenian Empire and the necessity connected with it. And, if we can find through our investigations no such telling omissions, then we may have added substantiation for the Thucydidean apologia from another historical field.

Our purpose, then, in the next four chapters of this thesis will be briefly to review the main facts of history touching on the Athenian Empire in the years that Thucydides' narrative covers, namely from 478 to 411. We shall use as our basic skeleton the texts of Thucydides dealing with the growth and maturity of the empire; and we shall comment on and fill in with evidence from numismatics wherever possible. In this way we may hope to approach an objective view of the history of these years and of

the Athenian Empire in general. For the moment then, in chapters two through five, we shall prescind from all considerations of morality and confine ourselves to a perusal of the two accounts of history. In the final chapter, we will once again return to our problem and, in the light of the history seen, attempt some conclusions on the objective validity of the Thucydidean apologia.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>It is difficult in such studies as these to promise a full solution to our problem. We may merely hope that our search may be profitable in pointing out the general direction of an answer. We do not expect a definitive, black-and-white proof statement that Thucydides was highly biased in his treatment of the Empire or that he was completely objective in his writings; we will be much more likely to uncover a more generic tendency towards either subjectivity or objectivity.

We may also in our last chapter add some few words on the question whether or not the contemporary Athenian code of morality was actually shared by Thucydides.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORY OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE: 478-454 B.C.

ἄμα δὲ καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπόδειξιν ἔχει τῆς  
τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐν οἷῳ τρόπῳ κατέστη . . .

--Thucydides, I, 97, 2.

In the spring of the year 478 B.C., the Greeks were exulting in their newly found power. They had effectively freed the mainland in the preceding August, when they had roundly trounced the Persian invaders at Plataea and at Mycale. Then, during the winter months, the Athenian fleet had opened up the Dardanelles to Greek navigation by capturing Sestos. And now, an armada of Greek allies under Spartan leadership was preparing to set sail for Cyprus to expel the Persian garrisons from the Greek cities on that island.

At this time the Spartan hegemony in Greece was an accepted fact. Sparta, largely because of her naturally military mode of life, had been the only first-rank military power in Greece at the time of the Persian invasion and, as a consequence, had assumed a more than generous portion of the fighting and administrative roles in the Greek resistance. Just recently, in 479, it had been her general, Pausanias, a member of the royal family

of Sparta, who had engineered the brilliant victory at Plataea. It surprised no one, then, that the Spartan ephors selected the same Pausanias to head the combined fleet of more than sixty allied vessels on the Cyprus campaign.

The Cyprus expedition under Pausanias triumphed within an amazingly short time. So the fleet sailed north and took Byzantium before the close of the summer.<sup>1</sup> These, in addition to his previous successes, turned the head of Pausanias; and he began to entertain grandiose thoughts of making himself ruler of the whole Greek world. Though still Greek commander-in-chief, he adopted the external trappings of an oriental potentate--wearing eastern dress, observing Persian customs, and surrounding himself with a personal bodyguard selected from the Persian and Egyptian prisoners taken at Byzantium. He gradually grew more and more insolent and oppressive towards the Greek officers under him. Finally, to make the situation thoroughly intolerable, he initiated a treasonable correspondence with Xerxes himself, in which he offered to help him overcome Greece.

At this point, the ephors began to grow alarmed at the various reports reaching them from the Hellespont. So they summoned Pausanias back to Sparta in the fall of 478 to stand

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<sup>1</sup>It is impossible to substantiate this early fall of Byzantium from its coinage because the city did not begin issuing either her iron or silver currency until the closing years of the fifth century. Confer Barclay Vincent Head, Historia Numorum, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1911), pp. 266-267.



trial on the charges accumulated against him. In the official investigation which ensued, some of the lesser accusations against him were proved; but the more serious count of treason was not. At any rate, he was removed from command, but allowed to return to Byzantium in an unofficial capacity in the following spring.<sup>2</sup>

This scandal, following as it did soon after the disgrace of another Spartan general, Leotychidas, who had mismanaged the combined Thessalian offensive in the previous year,<sup>3</sup> sowed the seeds of discontent among the non-Peloponnesian allies. And so, during the absence of Pausanias, some of the Ionians suggested that the group appoint a new, non-Doric leader. The proposal was well received by the majority of the army, most of whom were either Attic or Ionian; and an Athenian general was selected, who agreed to serve as supreme commander.

Thus, in the spring of 477, when the new general sent out by the Spartans arrived, he found the Athenian leadership an accomplished fact. Suprisingly enough, he made no great protest

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<sup>2</sup>Sources for this treatment of Pausanias and his management of the Spartan hegemony are Thucydides, I, 94-95; Herodotus, V, 32 and VIII, 3; Bury, 322-326; The Cambridge Ancient History, Edited by J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, and F. E. Adcock, Vol. V: "Athens, 478-401 B.C." (New York, 1927), 33-39; R. Weil, "Das Münzrecht der ΣΥΜΜΑΧΟΙ im ersten Attischen Seebund," Zeitschrift für Numismatik, XXVIII (1910), 351-364.

<sup>3</sup>The venality of some Spartan leaders when they escaped from the imposed frugality of their home life is notorious. Sparta allowed her people the use of only iron money, forbidding them gold and silver. But obviously she did not extirpate all their latent desires for the finer metals.

over this turn of events. Sparta, essentially a land power, was generally content as long as her affairs were not menaced on the Peloponnese and was growing tired of the prolonged sea campaign abroad. So she and the rest of the Peloponnesians used this as an excuse for a quiet withdrawal, thus unconsciously setting the stage for the future triumphs of Athens.

After the departure of the Peloponnesian forces, Athens and her allies carried on the campaign against the Persians by themselves. It was at this point that there came into being the Delian confederacy--that organization which was later to blossom forth into the Athenian Empire.<sup>4</sup> Thucydides describes its birth in this fashion:

After the Athenians had succeeded in this way to the leadership over the allies, who freely chose them on account of their hatred of Pausanias, they assessed the amount of their contributions, both for the states which were to furnish money for the war against the Barbarians and for those which were to furnish ships, the avowed object being to avenge themselves for what they had suffered by ravaging the King's territory. And it was then that the Athenians first established the office of Hellenic treasurers, who received the tribute; for so the contribution of money was termed. The amount of the tribute first assessed was four hundred and sixty talents, and the treasury of the allies was Delos, where the meetings were held in the temple.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The date of the formation of the Delian confederacy is disputed. It probably took place sometime between the winter of 478/7 and the following summer. Confer the chronological tables in A. W. Gomme, A Historical Commentary on Thucydides (3 vols. to date; Oxford, 1945-1956), I, 394; Meritt, A. T. L., III, 175 ff.

<sup>5</sup>I, 96.

The nature of the Athenian power at this time was "a leadership over allies who were autonomous and took part in the deliberations of common assemblies."<sup>6</sup>

Thus the Delian confederacy was at first a quite innocuous union of free Greek states which, under Athenian direction, sought to recoup their losses in the Persian invasions by despoiling the lands of the Great King. But it is not this state of "primitive innocence" that we are chiefly interested in, but rather how this free union became warped into the subsequent Athenian Empire. We wish, at this stage in our narrative, to observe the transition between confederacy and empire and to see how the early purpose of pursuing the Persians was subverted into the later purpose of Athens conquering her own allies.

Likewise, starting with the formation of the confederacy in 478/7, we can begin to trace in the larger states at least the influence of their political upon their economic life. Once Athens had gained control of the confederation of the allies and had started to levy tribute from most of the cities of the Aegean world, this military influence began to carry over into the econ-

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<sup>6</sup>I, 97, 1. The beginnings and the original purpose of the Delian league may be found treated in the following secondary sources: Bury, 328-329; Eugène Cavaignac, Etudes sur l'Histoire Financière d'Athènes au Cinquième Siècle (Paris, 1908), pp. 184-186; Percy Gardner, A History of Ancient Coinage (Oxford, 1918), p. 286; J. A. O. Larsen, "The Constitution and Original Purpose of the Delian League," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, LI (1940), 175-213; Weil, 353-354.

omic life. Athens, previously a strong merchant power, now became vastly stronger. And cities once able to compete with her commercially were forced to submit to her economic tyranny as well as her political domination.

This state of affairs, however, was not altogether evident at first. The power of Athens in the beginning was undefined and seemed to be somewhat slight; and so neither her political nor her economic mastery was felt at once. But, as we shall see, this power grew by constant exercise; and the gradual Athenian ascendancy in the control of trade can be seen in the fact that many cities were forced to switch to her Attic-Euboic mint standard and many more were driven to give up the striking of coins completely before the onslaught of the all-powerful Athenian tetradrachm. Naturally many of the small cities, which did not coin anyway, were not influenced by this growth of power; but, in the larger cities, as the stranglehold of Athens grows over the Greek world, we can watch coinage flicker and die out in many formerly wealthy states.

It might be profitable at this point, before resuming our narrative, to bring to the attention of the reader the relative validity or cogency of our evidence. Most of our material will be taken from archaeological findings, discoveries of hoards and of isolated coins, that is, the complete findings to date which enable the numismatist to attempt a true science of ancient coinage. But, because of the nature of our topic, the evidence

which we shall draw from this field will be chiefly negative--i.e., when the Athenians tightened their hold on the Aegean area, the various issues of coinage disappeared. This negative evidence is supplied by the fact that no coins have yet been discovered to fill in the contemporary gaps of the otherwise complete coinage series of these cities.

Such evidence in itself is tenuous. The fact that at this moment we possess no coins from a certain period for a given city does not mean that we will not find such coins in the future. Hence any individual piece of negative evidence is liable to be reversed at any time; and thus any individual statement made in the course of this thesis with regard to the present state of numismatic evidence is always open to further revision based on new discoveries. But, while the individual pieces of evidence may not be particularly cogent, still the over-all picture possesses a cumulative validity that is almost overwhelming. If we consider the present highly advanced state<sup>7</sup> of Greek numismatics and see how the coinage of every Greek city of respectable size is known in some detail for the period covering the last six centuries before the Christian era, we cannot help but notice the lacunae observable in the case of fifth-century coinage--gaps so

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<sup>7</sup>When we speak of the science of numismatics being in an advanced state, we speak from the point of view of the classicist. For our present purposes, we can glean much from the present state of the science. But, from the point of view of the numismatist, much remains to be done in clarifying the many details of his broad field.

universal among the Ionian Greeks and others affiliated with Athens that they cannot be insignificant.<sup>8</sup> Coins from these cities we have in abundance for the sixth and fourth centuries. The well-nigh complete absence of specimens from the fifth could hardly be an accident; and, as we shall see in this and succeeding chapters, this was not an accident, but evidence of the success of a definite Athenian policy.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Lancelot Lengyel, Chefs d'Oeuvre des Monnaies Grecques (Montrouge, 1952), p. 9.

<sup>9</sup>General sources on the scientific value of coins and/or negative evidence in the field are: Percy Gardner, The Types of Greek Coins (Cambridge, 1883), pp. 56-71; Stanley Lane-Poole, Coins and Medals, 3rd revised edition (London, 1894), p. 12; Kurt Ludwig Regling, Die Antike Münze als Kunstwerk (Berlin, 1924), p. 47; Oskar Viedeban, Antike Gewichtsnormen und Münzfüsse (Berlin, 1923) pp. 34-41.

We should also note at this point that many of the chief sources which we shall employ in establishing our numismatic history were published upwards of forty years ago. Head's Historia Numorum, perhaps our most valuable single source, was published in 1911; the various catalogues of the British Museum, written by Head, Hill, Poole, and Wroth, were issued between 1877 and 1897; Gardner's A History of Ancient Coinage was published in 1918.

Relying heavily on such books might seem to date our treatment; but this is not entirely true. The other sources that we shall cite almost as frequently, such as Robinson (1949) and Seltman, Greek Coins (1955), in many instances treat much the same matter as the older texts, though perhaps not extending their considerations over as large an area. It is only fair to remark that these more recent studies, which are in general more specialized, do not contradict the older accounts (save in a very few cases, none of which affect the Athenian Empire, e.g., as regards Athens from 594 to 561), but merely fill in more precise details in the outlines of the older authors. The "dated" books still remain authorities in their field and will continue to do so until some one combines their evidence with the more specialized recent work into a new definitive volume. Such a project, however, is not in sight.

Not all of our evidence, however, is negative. There will be a certain amount which will consist in either the change from the local to the Athenian standard of currency or the adoption of Athenian devices on the coins. The local standards were usually fixed by their relative convenience as an exchange rate for a given city; they would depend largely on the standards of the other states with whom the home city was most likely to do business. A shift in such a standard would indicate a corresponding shift in the commercial life of the city brought about by some exterior press of circumstances.<sup>10</sup> The second common type of positive evidence, the adoption of Athenian emblems on a city's coinage, would be a much more definite indication of the plight of a state. The city states were proud of their native blazons; and to surrender or to efface them in any way would hardly be consistent with the ordinary mode of action of a free city.<sup>11</sup>

But now let us return to our narrative. After the Peloponnesians had retired from Byzantium and the Athenians had gained their first, slim hold on their allies, the Delian confederacy for a number of years pursued its martial aims.<sup>12</sup> Thucydides is sparing in his information on the early activities of the con-

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<sup>10</sup>These circumstances need not necessarily be hostile in character.

<sup>11</sup>On the relation between coinage and state sovereignty, confer G. F. Hill, A Handbook of Greek and Roman Coins (London, 1899), pp. 82-85.

<sup>12</sup>Delos issued no coins after yielding to Athenian domination in 478. (Head, Historia Numorum, 485).

federacy. He was not concerned with most of its actions against the Persians in Asia Minor, since those would not contribute to his tale of the formation of the Athenian Empire. Instead he mentions only those campaigns which have a direct bearing on his story--i.e., those which took place in the chiefly Greek territories immediately surrounding the Aegean. Hence he confines his remarks on the operations of the Delian league during the first seven years of its existence to the following:

First, then, under the leadership of Cimon son of Miltiades, they took by siege Eion on the Strymon, which the Persians held, and enslaved its inhabitants; then they enslaved Scyros, the island in the Aegean inhabited by Dolopians and colonized it themselves. And a war arose between them and the Carystians, the other Euboeans taking no part in it, and after a time terms of capitulation were agreed upon.<sup>13</sup>

These three seemingly insignificant listings in themselves tell us a good deal about the gradually shifting character of the confederacy. Eion on the Strymon river was a seaport in Thrace about two hundred and twenty-five miles west of the Hellespont. In the year 476 it was the most important holding in the Thracian region still in the hands of the Persians. Its strategic value lay in the fact that it controlled the valley of the Strymon leading northward into the hill country and that it was a convenient sea base near the rich gold mines on the northern mainland near Thasos. Attacked in the late summer of 476, Boges, its Persian commander, held out under siege throughout the winter,

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<sup>13</sup>I, 98, 1-3.



but was eventually made to capitulate. Thus Eion passed into the hands of the confederacy, who enslaved its inhabitants. The fallen condition of the city is reflected in the remark of the British scholar Percy Gardner, who in his History of Ancient Coinage remarks: "It is noteworthy that we have no coin that we can with confidence give to Eion on the Strymon in the middle of the fifth century."<sup>14</sup>

The capture of Scyros, the second event mentioned by Thucydides in the early activities of the confederacy, took place about 474. Scyros, a rocky island in the Aegean between Attica and western Thrace (and so on the sea route to the Hellespont), was the stronghold of the Dolopian pirates, who preyed on passing shipping. The island fell to the forces of the confederacy, and its inhabitants too were enslaved. Besides this enslavement, the island was annexed to Athens; and Athenian colonists were sent to settle the land.

The capture of Scyros was the first recorded instance of Athens receiving direct profit from an adventure of the confederacy which the other members of the group did not share. Robinson also notes that the previous coinage of the island ceases abruptly around 470, a reasonable substantiation of Thucydides' account, all things considered.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Gardner, History, 274. Cf. also Head, Ibid., 197.

<sup>15</sup>E. Robinson, "The Athenian Currency Decree and the Coinages of the Allies," Hesperia, Supplement VIII (1949), 333.

The third event was the war with the Carystians, which lasted probably from 475 or 474 till 471. Carystia, the southern part of the island of Euboea, was inhabited by a racial group different from the rest of the island; and thus its inhabitants were not helped by their fellow Euboeans against Athens. The Carystians had originally refused to join the confederacy at Delos, but now they were coerced into doing so. Athens felt that it was dangerous to have a neutral state so near to Attica. Carystus, the city, was weak and unable to carry on an extended war with the Athenians. It capitulated and thus became the first state forced to join the confederacy against its will.<sup>16</sup>

These three events marked a definite progress in the power of Athens. At first she worked with the confederacy for its advantage, then for her advantage; and finally she began to use the confederacy almost as her personal tool, when she sought to swell its ranks with people whose absence would be a distinct disadvantage for her. The next occurrence noted by Thucydides brings out this transition more sharply: membership in the confederacy no longer remained a question of option, even for the original members. The once completely autonomous Greeks now found themselves as much under the thumb of Athens as the hapless Carystians.

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<sup>16</sup>Carystia in 471 entered the league as a subject, yet still retained certain vestiges of freedom. It did not change its coinage at this time, but only after further difficulties and its second capture. Secondary sources on Eion, Scyros, and Carystia are: Bury, 336-338; C. A. H., V, 50-53; Cavaignac, Etudes, 46.

Thucydides marks this milestone in the following words:

After this they waged war upon the Naxians, who had revolted, and reduced them by siege. And this was the first allied city to be enslaved in violation of the established rule; but afterwards the others also were enslaved as it happened in each case.<sup>17</sup>

Some thirty years earlier, Naxos had been the wealthiest and most powerful of the Cyclades. But now, when it attempted to secede from the league about 470,<sup>18</sup> it was easily blockaded by the allied fleet and reduced to submission. Thucydides gives no reasons why Naxos should have wanted to secede, but it seems fairly obvious that there must have been some dissatisfaction at this time among the members of the confederacy with the burdens being imposed by Athens.

Nor on the side of Athens was there wanting an excuse. Just as "political necessity" had been alleged for taking over Carystus, so too, in the case of Naxos, Athens as administrator of the confederacy was simply maintaining her right of forcing the individual members to fulfill their obligations until the association should be dissolved by the common consent of all. The action in itself may have seemed relatively simply done and perhaps even called for by the occasion, at least in the minds of the Athenians. But its real significance lay in the fact that by it a precedent was established and the terms of the original alliance definitely determined--the allies had not the right to secede.

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<sup>17</sup>I, 98, 4.

<sup>18</sup>The date may actually have been anywhere from 470 to 467.

"And this was the first allied city to be enslaved in violation of the established rule; but afterwards the others also were enslaved as it happened in each case."<sup>19</sup> When Thucydides speaks of enslavement here, he uses the word ἐδουλώθη. In other words, Naxos was practically reduced to the status of a subject of Athens; a grim punishment for secession to warn any other states who might be inclined to attempt some similar course of action. This subservient state of the island is attested to by its coinage, which ceased abruptly around the year 470--a sign of non-existent autonomy.<sup>20</sup>

After the description of the revolt of Naxos, Thucydides once more interrupts the thread of his narrative by inserting a brief paragraph on the principal causes for revolts from the league. In general, he says that these were "failures in bringing in the tribute or their quota of ships and, in some cases, refusal of military service."<sup>21</sup> Athens was exacting in her duties as tribute collector; and, when states did not comply with her demands, she easily brought them into submission.

We noted above that Athens at the inception of the league was not particularly strong. How then was she able to put down

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<sup>19</sup>I, 98, 4.

<sup>20</sup>Secondary sources on the coinage of Naxos are: Gardner, History, 244-246; Head, Historia Numorum, 488; Robinson, 329. Other secondary sources on Naxos will be given after our subsequent treatment of Thasos in this chapter.

<sup>21</sup>I, 99, 1.

revolts so readily? The reason for her increased strength was this. Many of the more short-sighted allies of the confederacy had not been overly eager about sending their own citizens on the Persian campaigns; so they had preferred to pay to obtain substitutes for services, both in men and in ships. These substitutes which they supported financially became practically a part of the Athenian fleet; Athenians or Athenian mercenaries manned the vessels, and Athenian commanders took complete charge of them. Hence the Athenian navy waxed strong, while the islanders sat home and paid to seal their own doom.<sup>22</sup>

After the revolt of Naxos, Thucydides mentions briefly the battle at the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia.<sup>23</sup> Here the confederate allies won decisive victories over the Persians both on land and sea and secured thereby control of southern Asia Minor from Caria to Pamphylia. Hence they were enabled to force Lydian communities to enroll in the league. Although Thucydides refers to the battle in passing, it is easy to glimpse its far-reaching effects among the cities of the region. The most striking example is, of course, Ephesus, which exhibits a noteworthy series of coinage beginning from approximately the year 700 B.C. and continuing through almost a millennium. The only noticeable stoppage in the issues of this city occurred from the years c. 469

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<sup>22</sup>I, 99, 1-3. Confer also Cavaignac, Etudes, 42.

<sup>23</sup>I, 100, 1. The date of Eurymedon is disputed; it could have taken place anywhere between 469 and 467

to 415 and might be taken as an index of Athens' ascendancy in the neighborhood--which began to wane after the disaster in Sicily around 415.<sup>24</sup>

A few years after the battle at Eurymedon and the consequent decline in the power of the Great King over the Aegean coast, the island of Thasos near Thrace revolted. Thucydides describes the events of the years 465-463 with terrifying brevity:

And some time afterwards it came to pass that the Thasians revolted from them, a quarrel having arisen about the trading posts and the mine on the opposite coast of Thrace, of which the Thasians enjoyed the profits. Thereupon the Athenians sailed with their fleet against Thasos, and, after winning a battle at sea, disembarked on the island.<sup>25</sup>

. . . and so the Thasians, who were in the third year of their siege, came to terms with the Athenians, pulling down their walls and delivering over their ships, agreeing to pay forthwith whatever sum of money should be required of them and to render tribute in future, and finally, giving up both the mainland and the mine.<sup>26</sup>

Thasos, the strongest state in the whole northern region around Thrace, was much more powerful than Naxos at the time of its rebellion. It had not been one of those states that had preferred to pay for substitutes, but had continued to maintain its own

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<sup>24</sup>Sources on the coinage of Ephesus and Lycia, which decreased somewhat in the volume of its output during the next few years, are: Head, Historia Numorum, 573, 688-692; G. F. Hill, Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycia, Pamphylia, and Pisidia (London, 1877), xx-xxi.

<sup>25</sup>I, 100, 2.

<sup>26</sup>I, 101, 3.

large fleet up until this time. Consequently, it was better able to resist the siege of Athens and might even have had some success in its defiance of the imperial city, but the unfortunate occurrence of the earthquake at Sparta and the subsequent revolt of the Helots prevented them from receiving the promised aid from that quarter. Thus in the winter of 463/2 they capitulated, surrendering their fleet, pulling down their fortifications, and giving up their posts on the mainland as well as their rights to work the rich gold mines of Mount Pangaesus.

These mines had previously provided the chief source of revenue for the Thasians, and their loss profoundly affected the city. Though Athens did not impose a ban on their coinage, still their once opulent flow of satyr and dolphin money pieces slowed down to a trickle after 463. Also, whereas they had formerly minted on the Babylonian standard, now they gradually changed their issues to the Attic standard; the weight of their 'drachms steadily decreased until they reached the level of Athenian coins and, in some instances, even dropped below it.<sup>27</sup>

Even more interesting to observe was what the Athenians did with their newly acquired gold. Athenian currency had always been issued on a strict silver standard; and it would have greatly com-

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<sup>27</sup>Secondary sources on the coinage of Thasos are: Gardner, History, 269-271; Head, Historia Numorum, 263-265; R. S. Poole, Catalogue of Greek Coins: The Thasians, Chersonese, Sarmatia, Dacia, Moesia, Thrace, etc. (London, 1877), 216-226. Secondary sources on the first two revolts from the confederacy, Naxos and Thasos, are: Bury, 337-338; C. A. H., V, 53-61; Cavaignac, Etudes, 47.

plicated her trade relations to have begun issuing on a gold one as well. Consequently, the Athenians shipped the bars of gold from Mount Pangaeus to Cyzicus, a poor city in the Hellespont, where electrum pieces were then minted. These coins were then employed in trade with the people of Asia Minor who still used the Persian or Babylonian standard, one which was based primarily on gold. Without interfering with her own domestic commerce, this practice afforded Athens an outlet for her gold and offered her further economic communication with the East.

The fact that these electrum coins of Cyzicus, which began towards the middle of the fifth century, really belonged to Athenian interests is evidenced both by the previous indigence of the city and by the devices placed on the pieces. Such typical Attic designs as Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Ge holding young Erichthonius, Cecrops, and Triptolemus in his winged car appear among the great variety of types in the new electrum coinage. The staters continued to appear down until the time of Alexander.<sup>28</sup>

With the conquering of both Naxos and Thasos, the chains of empire were gradually being forged. By the year 460, three classes of members in the confederacy had become apparent: (1) the non-

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<sup>28</sup>The abundant electrum coinage of Cyzicus may be found treated in: Cavaignac, Etudes, 184-186; Von Walther Giesecke, Antikes Geldwesen (Leipzig, 1938), 68-75; Gardner, History, 231-238; G. F. Hill, A Guide to the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, 3rd ed. (London, 1922), pp. 17-18; C. T. Seltman, Masterpieces of Greek Coinage (Oxford, 1949), p. 21; John Ward, Greek Coins and Their Parent Cities (London, 1902), pp. 97-99.



tributary allies who furnished ships, e.g., Chios, Lesbos, Samos; (2) tributary allies who remained independent, e.g., Abdera, Aenos, Sinope; (3) tributary allies who were dependent, e.g., Naxos, Thasos, Carystus. All cities coerced to join and all cities that had revolted and were subsequently subdued belonged to this third class, in which Athens wished eventually to include everyone.

About this time, also, probably in 461, Pericles, the man chiefly responsible for the final state of the Athenian Empire, came to power. Though his name is not mentioned explicitly in connection with the actions of the next decade or so, still it is reasonably certain that he was the guiding light behind most of the wonders wrought by Athens, which by the middle of the century had secured her supremacy over the Aegean world.

After the revolt of Thasos, the next event mentioned by Thucydides in connection with the rise of the Athenian Empire is the war with Aegina. Aegina, a small island just south of Athens, had been one of the foremost merchant powers in Greece for the two centuries prior to the Persian wars. She had been the first state in Europe to issue coinage; and her tortoise-back coins were known all over the civilized world. Her Aeginetan standard had become so firmly established in the Peloponnese, as well as in other regions, that even Athens was forced to pay all Peloponnesian mercenaries in this distasteful foreign standard. Aegina had feared the sudden rise of the Athenian power in the Aegean

because her trade routes with the East and the greater part of her commerce lay in that area. The situation became desperate about 458, when Athens completed negotiations with Megara for the use of the port Nisaea. Aegina was the first to realize that this would give the Athenians almost complete control over the Saronic Gulf.

Other Peloponnesian states also feared the Athenian menace which was moving in in their near vicinity. They joined with Aegina into a large coalition fleet, which Athens defeated near Aegina in the summer of 458. Athens then followed up her advantage by investing the unfortunate island both by land and sea. After a siege of two years, Aegina fell, agreed to surrender her fleet, and to pay tribute to Athens. This was a welcome success for the Athenians both strategically and commercially. Along with Thasos, Aegina was among the most opulent of the subject states; they were both assessed thirty talents per year, much more than the other cities.

The decline of Aegina after 456 is likewise reflected in the drop in her output of coinage. As befitted a prosperous merchant city, she had, prior to 456, issued drachms and tetradrachms on a grand scale and had even been experimenting with a new reverse type to replace her well-known incuse just before her demise. But now, she ceased to mint the larger denominations, though she continued to mint a small supply of triobols for local use. Since her standard after such a great vogue of more than two cen-

turies could hardly be changed, she was allowed to preserve it.<sup>29</sup>

While the siege of Aegina was still in progress in 457, the Spartans had sent an army north into Boeotian territory, ostensibly to help their fellow Dorian cities who were being oppressed by Phocis. The real purpose, however, had been to join forces with the Boeotians and then to make a combined attack on the Athenians. This coalition force won a victory over a large Athenian army at Tanagra, not far from the border of Boeotia and Attica. But the battle was not decisive, and the Spartans withdrew soon afterwards to their homeland.

About two months after the departure of the Spartan troops, the Athenians avenged themselves. Marching once again into Boeotian territory, they easily overcame the local forces at Oenophyta, thus gaining control over the whole land except for Thebes. The newly acquired cities were not forced to join the confederacy, but only to furnish soldiers when demanded.' (The reason for this leniency is that Athens' hold over them was probably slim; and she wished, if possible, to avoid engendering an immediate revolt.) The Athenians, however, did utilize this opportunity to set up democratic governments in many cities.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Sources for the coinage of Aegina are: C. S. Comparetti, A Descriptive Catalogue of Greek Coins (New York, 1921), pp. 54-55; Gardner, History, 247; Head, Historia, 395-397; Robinson, 336.

<sup>30</sup>It was the current belief in politics that democratic governments even among traditionally hostile peoples would be favorable to a democratic government at home. The fallacy of this statement was proved over and over again to the Athenians during the course of the next forty years.

This temporary eclipse of Boeotian power is somewhat reflected in their coinage. Oligarchic governments at Tanagra and Orchomenus had been minting actively since about 478; but their issues cease in 457. And, under the Athenian aegis, four small democratic governments--Acraephium, Coroneia, Haliartus, and Tanagra--celebrated their autonomy by issuing coin. These new issues continued just for the short period of Attic supremacy in the area.<sup>31</sup>

The rising star of Athenian imperialism, as far as we know, was marred by only one setback during this era. This was the ill-fated Athenian expedition to Egypt. In 460, about two hundred ships of the league had gone to the land of the Nile to aid the Libyan Inarus, who was attempting to revolt from the pro-Persian administration. This large force had fought with varying success for about six years; but finally the enemy had trapped the Athenian forces and well nigh annihilated them in 454. Thucydides devotes a long section of his work to the telling of this grandiose enterprise; but it has only indirect bearing on the rise of the Athenian Empire, as we shall presently see.

In the year 454, after the news of the disaster in Egypt had

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<sup>31</sup>The coins of Boeotia are treated in detail in Head's Coins of Boeotia (Oxford, 1881). The effects of the current battles are mentioned on pages 196 through 200.

Thucydides treats the campaigns of Aegina and Boeotia in I, 105-108. Secondary sources on this history are: Bury, 355-357; C. A. H., V, 76-83; Cavaignac, Etudes, 56.

reached Athens, Pericles made the bold stroke which left no doubt as to the status of the Delian confederacy. He removed the treasury from its former headquarters on the island of Delos and installed it on the Acropolis in Athens. All pretense was at an end. The league had now openly become the Empire of the Athenians.

It is strange that Thucydides makes no mention of this important move. We know of it only through later historians, especially Plutarch,<sup>32</sup> and from the quota lists which now begin to appear regularly. These lists, which were kept as treasury records to show the payment of the annual  $\delta\alpha\pi\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\eta}$ , begin in the year 454/3.<sup>33</sup>

Commentators on Thucydides have regarded this omission as somewhat of a mystery because, as is generally agreed, the transfer of the treasury was perhaps the most important single event in the transition from confederacy to empire. This was the decisive point in the relationship between Athens and her allies, and Athens could from now on do pretty much as she liked with the group. Various reasons for the omission have been offered. Thucydides pays little attention to the levying of tribute and other economic aspects of war, though he does not ignore them completely. But this is not wholly satisfactory, because he will on occasion stop to relate almost insignificant financial details,

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<sup>32</sup>Pericles, XII, 1.

<sup>33</sup>The  $\delta\alpha\pi\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\eta}$  was one-sixtieth of the regular annual assessment, paid to Athena for use of her precinct as treasury.

as we shall see later.<sup>34</sup> Others suggest that the event was too well known, and that Thucydides did not wish merely to repeat earlier chroniclers and rehash the obvious. But there seems to be little foundation for this contention, since the historian does not hesitate to relate such well-worn themes as the woes of the Sicilian Expedition, the siege of Plataea, and so forth. Hence some maintain that Thucydides left the transfer of the treasury out of his account because it would not fit into the scheme of his attempted justification of the Empire. Yet this too does not seem likely, since the rising power of Persian Egypt and the consequent prestige offered the Phoenician fleet in the Aegean would have afforded the Athenians ample alibi for the removal. And Thucydides has not hesitated to tell us of events, e.g., the Melian affair, where the Athenian excuse was much less plausible. We will return to this problem again in a future chapter.<sup>35</sup>

By way of summary, then, of this period from 478 to 454, let us make the following observations. After our initial remarks on the origin of the Delian league, which could hardly be substantiated from numismatics, we were able for the most part to trace a certain parallelism between Thucydides' narrative and the evi-

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<sup>34</sup>Confer Appendix I.

<sup>35</sup>The subject of the removal of the treasury is discussed in: Bury, 339-340; C. A. H., V, 84-85; Cavaignac, Etudes, 59-62; Gomme, I, 370-372.

dence from coinage. With the exceptions of Eion, which had not issued coinage previous to her capture, and Carystus, which remained somewhat independent under the confederacy until 446, the other major exploits of Athens left their mark on contemporary coinage. Scyros, Naxos, Ephesus, Tanagra, Orchomenus, all stopped minting when they fell under Athenian domination. The once wealthy states of Thasos and Aegina were forced to curtail their output of coins drastically, and Thasos even switched from the Babylonian to the Attic standard. At the same time, Cyzicus profited by the new Athenian management of the Thasian gold mines and began to issue her prolific staters with the pro-Athenian blazons. And even tiny Delos, under Athenian administration, issued no coins after the inception of the league in 478/7. Finally, the great stone tablets from the Acropolis and passages in later historians tell us of the removal of the treasury from its original site at Delos, filling in a lacuna in Thucydides' narrative. Thus we find considerable help in substantiating the Thucydidean account of the years 478-454 through coinage and even, in the particular instances of Ephesus and the transfer of the treasury, adding to it.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE HISTORY OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE: 454-432 B.C.

- Ψη. ψηφισματοπώλης εἰμί καὶ νόμους νέους  
ἤκω παρ' ὑμᾶς δεῦρο πωλήσων. Πι. τὸ τί;  
Ψη. χρῆσθαι Νεφελοκοκκυγίδας τοῖσδε τοῖς μέτροισι καὶ  
σταθοῖσι καὶ ψηφίσμασι καθάπερ Ὀλοφύξιοι.

--Aristophanes, *Aves*, 1037-1041.

In 451, the Peloponnesians and the Athenians agreed to observe a five-year truce. This left Athens free to settle the Persian question once and for all. Amassing the collective strength of her empire, she conducted a number of campaigns in Egypt and Cyprus. Eventually, in 449, her forces won memorable victories both on land and sea near Salamis in Cyprus. The Persians sued for a permanent peace, which the Athenians joyfully concluded, probably in the same year.<sup>1</sup>

Once peace with the Persians had become a reality, there was no longer the slightest pretext for allowing the old Delian confederacy to continue; its original express purpose had been accomplished. Athens, however, instead of relinquishing her hold on the members of the old league, tightened her grip on the foreign states by issuing in the year 449 what was known as the

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<sup>1</sup>Sources on the treaties of 451 and 449 are: Thucydides, I, 112, 1-4; Bury, 359-360; *C. A. H.*, V, 87.



Decree of Clearchus.<sup>2</sup>

This new decree protected the Athenian monopoly of trade by forbidding: (1) the striking of silver coins in any of the cities of what was now her empire; (2) the use of any currency, weights, and measures other than Athenian. Despite the recent defeat of Aegina, there was still a mass of Aeginetan money in circulation, which provided a constant and irritating reminder to Athens of that city's all-too-recent greatness; and this was probably a major factor in the promulgation of the law.<sup>3</sup> By the very fact that such a stern proclamation could be enforced and that states could be forbidden, as Seltman puts it, to "fly their national flag by stamping their state device upon coinage,"<sup>4</sup> proves that Athens at this time possessed true imperial power and that auto-

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<sup>2</sup>We do not possess a complete text of the Decree of Clearchus. A partial resoration may be found in Robinson, 327.

The contents and date of the decree may be inferred both from the incomplete text and from a later decree, published to reinforce the requirements of the former. This second decree, probably published sometime between 423 and 420, likewise spoke of the desired uniformity among the states of the Empire in the matter of money, weights, and measures. A complete text of this latter decree may be found in: Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Dittenberger, Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum (4 vols.; Leipzig, 1915-1924), I, 111-124; Marcus N. Tod, A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions (Oxford, 1933), #67, pp. 163-166.

<sup>3</sup>Robinson, 325.

<sup>4</sup>This quotation is an adaptation of a statement of Seltman in his Greek Coins, 2nd ed. (London, 1955), p. 112.

mony for many states had ceased to exist.

Thus we might say that the effects of this decree serve to show the extent of Athens' power at this time. Among the states of the Aegean world which ceased issuing coinage around the year 450 for no apparent reason other than this decree, we find the following:

Abydus	Cnidus	Paros
Aenos	Colophon	Phaselis
Antandros	Cyme	Potidaea
Assos	Dardanus	Scapsa
Camirus	Dikaea (Eretria)	Scepsis
Carthaea	Halicarnassus	Scione
Cebren	Ialysus	Selymbria
Chalcedon	Lampsacus	Siphnos
Chersonesus (Hellespont)	Lindus	Stagira
Clazomenae	Mende	Terone. <sup>5</sup>

It is certainly more than coincidence that all these cities should stop minting within about a year of one another; and it provides ample substantiation of the success of the Decree of Clearchus.

These, however, are just the states which intermitted their coinage for the first time after the decree. There were a number of other states which had also previously issued coins, but seem to have stopped even before 449:

Aegina	Calymna	Chalcis
Andros	Carpathus	Chersonesus
Astypalaea	Carystus	(Caria)

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<sup>5</sup>The data contained in this list may all be verified by the tables in Robinson. Some of it can likewise be gotten from Head, Historia Numorum, and Gardner, History. For a detailed substantiation with regard to the coinage of Aenos, confer J. M. F. May, Ainos, Its History and Coinage (Oxford, 1950); this work contains many fine tables for that state and its coinage during the whole of the fifth century.

Corosia	Iulis	Seriphus
Cos <sup>o</sup>	Methymna	Sermylia
Delos	Naxos	Tenedos
Dikaea (Abdera)	Olynthus (Chalcidice)	Tenos
Ephesus	Parium	Termera
Eretria	Peparethos	Thasos
Erythrae	Smothrace	Thera
Iasus	Scithae	Tinde. <sup>7</sup>
	Scyros	

These two lists, taken together, give us a fine indication of the effectiveness of Athenian domination.<sup>8</sup>

Once again, we must remark the strange silence of Thucydides on this matter. He makes no mention whatsoever of what was perhaps the first official act of tyranny on the part of the Athenians; and such an explicit show of imperial power could hardly have escaped his notice. Why did he leave out the decree? There are at least two possible reasons that we might adduce. Of the thirty-three names given in the second list, we might infer only seven from the previous Thucydidean text--Aegina, Carystus, Delos, Ephesus, Naxos, Scyros, and Thasos. When and how the downfall of the other twenty-six states came about is left to our imagination;

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<sup>6</sup>From 449 on, Cos was permitted to issue only a few commemorative coins (no national currency) in honor of her festival of Apollo. (Head, Historia Numorum, 632.)

<sup>7</sup>This list may also be substantiated in its entirety from the tables in Robinson and the other sources mentioned in note 5 on the preceding page. I have omitted Tanagra and Orchomenus from this list because they resumed coinage (i.e., oligarchical coinage through Thebes) shortly after the decree went into effect.

<sup>8</sup>Some cities such as Cnidus, even though their regular series had ceased in 449, were allowed to mint small denominations on the Attic standard. Confer the tables in Robinson.

Thucydides probably did not deem their demise worthy of note. And, in a similar manner, he may not have thought that the suppression of many of the cities in the first list was worth mentioning and hence omitted all reference to the decree, as he had omitted the transfer of the treasury some five years earlier--a much more important event. A second possible reason why Thucydides neglected the decree may be that its conditions were not universally enforceable. Regions at some distance from Athens and thus not so rigidly under her domination either continued to mint as before, e.g., Lycia,<sup>9</sup> or eventually had to be given concessions so as to stave off revolt, e.g., the Thracian region after 439.<sup>10</sup>

Athens was now at the height of her power in the fifth century. She had control over most of the cities in the Aegean area, with large holdings in Euboea, Thrace, the Euxine, the Hellespont, Ionia, Caria, Lycia, and the Cyclades, with a few outposts in the Peloponnese (e.g., Troezen) and in Western Greece (e.g., Naupactus). She was also in alliance with Megara and was operating that city's port at Nisaea. She ruled Aegina and had nothing to fear from her conquered northern neighbors in Boeotia. Furthermore, because of her five-year truce with Sparta and her allies, she

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<sup>9</sup>The silver coinage of Lycia was evidently back to normal by 450.

<sup>10</sup>We will return to this subject later on in the chapter. Secondary sources on the Decree of Clearchus include: Bury, 366; Seltman, Greek Coins, 111 and 155, note; Weil, 356.

was for the moment free to consolidate her holdings. In this undertaking, however, she would not be altogether successful.

In 448 a small series of hostilities took place, which have usually been dignified by historians by the term, the "Sacred War." The Spartans marched north across the Isthmus of Corinth to expel the Phocians from Delphi and to make the international oracle autonomous. When they departed, they left the Delphians in possession of the shrine. The Athenians meanwhile, careful not to violate the truce, waited until the Spartans had left and then went and reinstated the Phocians. Beginning in this period, that is, from 448 to 421, the previous series of coinage from Delphi, featuring the head of the eponymous Delphos, is interrupted--lending credibility to Thucydides' account of Athenian ascendancy over both Phocians and Delphians.<sup>11</sup>

The following year, 447, the Thebans incited a rebellion in the extreme northwest of Boeotia. The Athenians at first did not think that the uprising would prove to be serious and sent out a token force of one thousand men to quell the disturbance. Their army was badly beaten at Coronea, and many of the Athenians were taken prisoner. Holding these men as hostages, the Boeotians then forced the Athenians to evacuate their whole territory to regain their captured troops. After these severe losses, Locris and other cities renounced their alliance with Athens; and, with a single unfortunate incident, the entire em-

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<sup>11</sup>Thucydides. I. 112, 5. Head, *Historia Numorum*. 340-341.

pire of Athens to its immediate north collapsed.<sup>12</sup>

Once the authority of the Athenians over Boeotia had ceased, so did the many independent governments which had been issuing coinage since 457. Thebes regained her suzerainty over the land; and, after 446, hers are the only Boeotian coins seen for some time.<sup>13</sup>

The next year, 446, the year in which the treaty with the Peloponnesians was due to expire, the Athenians suffered more reverses of fortune. Thucydides tells of the events of this year quite succinctly:

Not long after this Euboea revolted from Athens; and Pericles had just crossed over to the island with an Athenian army when word was brought to him that Megara had revolted, that the Peloponnesians were about to invade Attica, and that all the Athenian garrison had been destroyed by the Megarians except such as had escaped to Nisaea. The Megarians had effected this revolt by bringing Corinthians, Sicyonians, and Epidaurians to their aid. So Pericles in haste brought his army back again from Euboea. After this the Peloponnesians, under the command of Pleistoanax, son of Pausanias, king of the Lacedaemonians, advanced into Attica as far as Eleusis and Thria, ravaging the country; but without going further, they returned home. Thereupon the Athenians again crossed over into Euboea under the command of Pericles and subdued the whole of it; the rest of the island they settled by agreement, but expelled the Hestiaeans from their homes and themselves occupied the territory.

Withdrawing their troops from Euboea not long afterwards they made a truce with the Lacedaemonians and their allies which was to last for thirty years,

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<sup>12</sup>Thucydides, I, 113.

<sup>13</sup>Head, Coins of Boeotia, 201-209.

restoring Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen, and Achaea; for these were the places belonging to the Peloponnesians which the Athenians held.<sup>14</sup>

The enemies of Athens had timed their actions well in 446. The Euboean revolt drew Pericles and his men away from Athens. Then, when Pericles was informed of the massacre of the Athenian garrison at Megara and of the Peloponnesians menacing Attica, he was forced to return to defend his home territory. The Spartans and their allies were content with a few spoils from the Athenian homeland, as long as they succeeded in freeing the Megarid from imperial control; so they soon retired. Then Pericles was free to concentrate his attention on Euboea, which he quickly conquered and made the whole island subject to him--just as Carystia on the southern tip had been reduced some twenty-five years earlier. The Hestiaeans were so harshly dealt with probably because their resistance was the most obstinate. They were driven from their homes, and their land was annexed to Athens.

This downfall of Euboea to the status of subject state was reflected also in her numismatic life. The right of coinage was withdrawn from all cities on the island in 446, and no more of their cuttlefish or nymph coins were seen until 411.<sup>15</sup>

The events of this fateful year had taught the Athenians a lesson. They could not successfully manage wars on two fronts

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<sup>14</sup>I, 114-115, 1.

<sup>15</sup>I, 114. Head, Historia Numorum, 355-357.

at one time; and they could not keep their empire in check and the Peloponnesians out of their territory. They had lost their valuable control over the Megarid in the process.<sup>16</sup> Lest this same error be committed again, the Athenians decided to take time off to consolidate their holding; and, to this end, they concluded a rather expensive treaty with the Peloponnesians, which was to last for thirty years. In the agreement, they were obliged to surrender Pegae and Nisaea, the two ports they had been using on the Megarid, Troezen, the only city in the Peloponnese which used the Attic standard on their coinage and which put Athenian emblems on their money such as the helmeted Athena,<sup>17</sup> and Achaea--in short, all their holdings in the Peloponnese.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, within the space of two brief years, Athens had lost almost all her empire in her immediate vicinity on the Greek mainland: both Boeotia and Megara. Though she still retained Aegina and, of course, Attica, she now began to take steps that this would not occur again and that all the places which she then held would never be able to stage such successful revolts.

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<sup>16</sup>Since none of the coins of Megara were inscribed until the first half of the fourth century, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not the ten-year domination of Athens had any effect on her coinage. (Head, Historia Numorum, 393.)

<sup>17</sup>The coins of Troezen are treated in Head, Ibid., 443.

<sup>18</sup>I, 114. Secondary sources on the history of the campaigns in Boeotia, Euboea, and Megara are: Bury, 361-363; C. A. H., V, 88-90; Cavaignac, Etudes, 56. Secondary sources on the peace of 446 are: Bury, 362-363; C. A. H., V, 90-92. Cf. also I, 115, 1.



Probably Athens experienced no more serious difficulties for the next six years and was able to weld her Empire into a reasonably well-organized whole. For neither numismatics nor Thucydides tell us of any untoward event after the peace treaty of 446 until the Samian War, which began in 440.

The occasion of this war was a dispute which arose between Samos and Miletus about the possession of Priene, a town between them on the mainland of Ionia. In the war which resulted from their quarrel, Miletus was vanquished and, as a tributary ally, appealed to Athens against Samos, an independent ally. These cries of the Milesians were seconded by a group of private citizens of Samos who disliked their current government and desired to set up a new one.

Athens decided the case in favor of Miletus. Pericles sailed with forty triremes to Samos and overthrew the reigning aristocracy. He took hostages from among the overthrown party and established a democracy, leaving behind him an Athenian garrison for their protection. The exiled nobles, however, who had fled to the mainland, did not take their defeat lightly. Enlisting the support of the satrap of Sardis, they hired some mercenaries and crossed over to Samos by night. They took the Athenians by surprise, imprisoned them along with the democrats who fell into their hands, and also secretly removed their hostages from Lemnos where they were being detained.

Pericles, however, was not entirely inactive. He and a

fleet of fifty-three ships fought the Samian fleet off the island of Tragia and prevailed. He then blockaded Samos by sea and invested the city itself with three walls, guarded by Athenian infantry. The Samians resisted for about eight months, but finally agreed to capitulate--pulling down their walls, giving over hostages, surrendering their ships, and paying an indemnity.<sup>19</sup> The democratic government was reinstated.<sup>20</sup>

Samos seems to have been the first city that attempted revolt that was allowed after recapture to retain a measure of her old freedom. This was in all probability due to one or all of the following considerations: her nearness of blood to the Athenian people, her large size, her previous record of loyalty, or the occasion for the revolt (since she had not premeditated the defection, but merely had refused to accept an Athenian decision). Her rights were somewhat curtailed; after the surrender, she was made to abandon her former Milesian standard of coinage for the Attic. Her new coins, much superior in style to her previous ones, are so strikingly different from them that it is presumed that the dies were engraved by Athenian artists imported during a period of heavy Athenian influence. Later on, when an aristo-

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<sup>19</sup>During the Samian trouble of 440-439, Byzantium had also revolted. But, after the fall of Samos, she quickly came to terms with Athens, agreeing to be subject as before. This revolt of Byzantium is noted by Thucydides in I, 115, 5 and 117, 3.

<sup>20</sup>The revolt of Samos is treated in I, 115, 2 - 117; Bury, 383-384; C. A. H., V, 169-171.

cratic party friendly to the Athenians came to power about 428, the Athenians allowed them once more to mint on the Milesian standard; but an olive branch, similar to that found on Athenian coinage, regularly takes its place in the field, testifying to Samian loyalty to Athens.<sup>21</sup>

After this revolt, some concessions on the subject of coinage seem to have been made, especially to the northern allies in the Thracian tribute region. Aphytis, Mende, Aenos, and Thasos resumed their interrupted coinage sometime shortly after 440. Perhaps this softening of imperial policy might hint at an effort being made to keep some of the allies who disliked Athenian financial policy and whose remoteness might afford some difficulty in suppressing potential revolts. Such a softening in policy is not revealed by Thucydides; but this is hardly to be expected since he does not mention the inauguration of the policy in 449.<sup>22</sup>

After this slight change in Thrace, Thucydides, in 'conclud-

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<sup>21</sup>The coins of Samos are treated in Comparetti, 78; Gardner, History, 248-250; Head, Historia Numorum, 602-603; Robinson, 330-331. An interesting sidelight to the switch in minting standards at this time is the corresponding change in other weights and measures. During the last century, one of the ancient measurement standards from this period was found on Samos, with the Attic standards inscribed over the earlier Samian standards--a striking confirmation of both Thucydides and coinage. For this find, confer A. Michaelis, "The Metrological Relief at Oxford," The Journal of Hellenic Studies, IV (1883), 335-350, but especially page 340.

<sup>22</sup>The Thracian concessions may be found treated in C. A. H., V, 171-176 and Robinson, 338.

ing his account of the remaining seven years of the Pentecontetia, 439-432, touches briefly on the two events that immediately preceded the Peloponnesian War: the Corcyrean affair and the battles at Potidaea, which later came to be interpreted as an Athenian violation of the truce of 446.<sup>23</sup> Corcyra had always remained an independent ally of Athens; hence no change is observed in her coinage. Potidaea was included among those allies of the Athenians who ceased minting in 449 after the Decree of Clearchus; and she did not, of course, mint during her brief period of revolt.<sup>24</sup>

After these events, Sparta summoned an assembly of her allies who had grievances against Athens with regard to the violation of the thirty-years peace. During the meetings of this assembly, various speeches were given, including the defense speech of the Athenian already mentioned in chapter one and a speech by the aged Spartan king Archidamus, who counselled postponing hostilities against so strong a power as Athens. Eventually this first assembly of the Lacedaemonians and their allies decided that the treaty had been broken<sup>25</sup> and that the Athenians were in the wrong.

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<sup>23</sup>The brief mention of Potidaea and Corcyra is made in I, 118, 1 at the end of Thucydides' account of the Pentecontetia. He had treated them at length in I, 56-67 and I, 24-55 earlier.

<sup>24</sup>For the coins of Corcyra, confer, Historia Numorum, 325-326; for those of Potidaea, confer Robinson 333 ff.

<sup>25</sup>I, 87-88.

The meeting adjourned, and the Spartans sent envoys to Delphi to ascertain the advisability of going to war. After receiving a favorable reply from the god,<sup>26</sup> they convened another assembly of their allies to find out whether all their Peloponnesian confederates wanted to go to war with them.<sup>27</sup> After sundry speeches, the majority voted for war; and preparations for their first offensive to be undertaken in the following year were begun.<sup>28</sup>

By way of summary, then, for the early years of the Empire from 454 to 432, let us make the following observations. Three events discussed in this chapter, namely the truce of 451 with the Spartans, the treaty of 449 with the Persians, and the assemblies at Sparta in 432, can of their very nature receive no substantiation from numismatics.<sup>29</sup> The treaty of 446 with the Peloponnesians receives at best an indirect confirmation of one of its conditions--namely that Troezen was a town associated with Athens, as seen from its related standard and emblems, facts unparalleled elsewhere in the Peloponnese. We do not, however, know enough about Troezen's fifth-century coins to be able to say that they ceased to be struck in this manner after the city came

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<sup>26</sup>I, 118, 3.

<sup>27</sup>I, 125, 1.

<sup>28</sup>The assemblies at Sparta are described in I, 67-89 and 118-125; Bury, 394-396; C. A. H., V, 187-189.

<sup>29</sup>Few commemorative coins were issued by the ancient Greeks. Though not absolutely impossible, it is highly improbable that they would be issued here.

under the domination of the Peloponnesians. Similarly with the coinage of Megara. From the fact that the money of that city was not inscribed at this period, we can tell very little about its history; but, in all likelihood, Megara retained its independence during the ten or so years that it spent in the Athenian alliance, and so little influence would have been felt in its coinage.

But we obtain quite strong substantiation for Thucydides' account in the coinage of Delphi after the Sacred War, in the coinage of Boeotia after the revolt of 447, and in the coinage of Euboea after 446. The issues of Samos after the Samian War form a small history in themselves. Furthermore, numismatics adds to Thucydides' narrative in at least two places, when it tells us of the Decree of Clearchus in 449 and its effectiveness and of the coinage concessions in the North after the Samian War. While we cannot verify so high a percentage of events from this period as we could for the previous period treated in chapter two, still the numismatic evidence nowhere contradicts Thucydides' chronicle. Furthermore, while the coinage does point out certain omissions in the history, these seem to be in keeping with Thucydides' primary concern with political and military history and could be reasonably defended from that point of view.

At the present stage of our narrative, we will rest content with pointing out the parallelisms between Thucydides and numismatics. We need not expect them to coincide perfectly, but we will take up their various discrepancies in more detail in the

final chapter of this thesis.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HISTORY OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE: 432-416 B.C.

καὶ ἔστιν ὁ πόλεμος οὐχ ὀπλῶν τὸ πλεόν,  
ἀλλὰ δαπάνης.

--Thucydides, I, 83, 2.

In the ninth chapter of his second book, Thucydides gives us a lineup of the parties which would participate in the great war about to take place. Thus, in 431, we can gain some impression of the size of the Athenian Empire, when we see that its roster comprises:

. . . the Chians, Lesbians, Plataeans, the Messenians of Naupactus, most of the Acarnanians, the Corcyraeans, the Zacynthians, and in addition the cities which were tributary in the following countries: the seaboard of Caria, the Dorians adjacent to the Carians, Ionia, the Hellespont, the districts on the coast of Thrace, and the islands which lie between the Peloponnesus and Crete toward the east, with the exception of Melos and Thera. Of these the Chians, Lesbians, and Corcyraeans furnished ships, the rest infantry and money. Such were the allies of each side and the preparations they made for the war.<sup>1</sup>

We can vouch for the accuracy of this Thucydidean list in at least some degree by the following evidence taken from coinage.

First we might divide the list into two parts: the allies mentioned by name (e.g., the Chians, Lesbians, etc.) and those

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<sup>1</sup>II, 9, 4-6.



mentioned by region only (e.g., Carian seacoast, adjacent Dorians, etc.) The first section of the list, comprising seven names in all, is made up by what we have elsewhere called allies of the first class, namely those enjoying complete independence and paying no tribute, but furnishing their own ships and soldiery. Chios, the first name in this section, was never conquered by Athens; her coinage remained continuous from the Persian wars down through the fourth century. Lesbos was likewise still minting in 431, and she would continue to do so down to the revolt which ruined her some three years later. Plataea was such a small town that it did not normally issue coinage during the fifth century; hence we can find no evidence on either side here. The Messenians, after escaping from Ithome, had settled at Naupactus only around 460 and had employed Athenian coinage from the date of their founding out of gratitude to their Attic protectors. Of the towns in Acarnania, only Leucas and Anactorium were large enough to issue their own coins during the fifth century; and in neither of these cities is there seen any decline in minting during the course of the century. Corcyra has left us a steady series of cow-and-calf coins from 585 B.C. down to 338 B.C.; and Zacynthus likewise continued to mint her Apollo-tripod pieces from the sixth through the fourth centuries. Hence, whatever allies mentioned by name in this section, if they did issue coinage, continued to do so during the fifth century up until at least this time--a good indication that they were members in good

standing among the first-class or independent allies.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, when we look at the coinage of the regions mentioned in the second list, we find that many states which had minted in earlier days had ceased to do so by 431. We will mention a few cities of each region by way of example. In Caria, Chersonesus, Halicarnassus, Iasus, and Termera had stopped issuing; yet it is noteworthy that Aspendus, Celenderis, and Lycia had not ceased. This latter fact is perhaps indicative of the trouble that Athens had in controlling Caria, suggested certainly by its refusal to pay the tribute when an additional levy was attempted in 428/7 during the revolt of Lesbos. In the nearby Dorian regions, Astypalaea, Calymna, Camirus, Carpathus, Cos, Ialysus, and Lindus were no longer minting; only Cnidus was allowed to strike a few coins, but it had been forced to switch to the Attic standard. In Ionia, which should probably here be taken in a wide sense so as to include the Aeolian settlements in northwestern Asia Minor, Assus, Ephesus, Erythrae, Clazomenae, Colophon, and

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<sup>2</sup>The coinage of the Chians and Lesbians can be verified from the tables in Robinson. Chios has merited special consideration also in Gardner, History, 250-253; Head, Historia Numorum, 599-600; and in an article of Gardner's: "The Financial History of Ancient Chios," The Journal of Hellenic Studies, XL, (1920), 160-173. A further bibliography on the coins of Lesbos will be found later in this chapter.

The bibliography for the other independent allies is: Plataea--Head, Ibid., 347; Naupactus--Gardner, History, 285; Acarnanians--Head, Ibid., 328-334 (though Anactorium itself did not come under the power of the Athenians until six years later); Corcyraeans--Head, Ibid., 325-326; Zacynthians--Head, Ibid., 429.

Cyme had stopped; Phocaea, probably one of Athens' electrum cities like Cyzicus,<sup>3</sup> Samos, permitted by the special agreement of 439 mentioned in the last chapter, and Teos retained their minting privileges. In the Hellespont, Abydus, Astacus, Chersonesus, Dardanus, Lampsacus, Parium, Selymbria, Scepsis, and Tenedos were no longer minting; there continued only Chalcedon, like Cnidus forced to issue on the Attic standard, and Cyzicus, Athens' link with Persian trade. In the area around Thrace to the north, Dikaea (Eretria), Dikaea (Abdera), Olynthus of the Chalcidians, Peparethos, Potidaea, Samothrace, Serrymia, Sciene, Scyros, Stagira, Terone, and Tinde had stopped; but Abdera, Acanthus, Maroneia, and Neapolis continued through the fifth century--an indication, as in the case of Caria, that this area was not overly well under control, since it was one of the first areas to rebel during the Archidamian War which was now getting under way. Also, in line with the concession policy of 439, Aeneia, Aenos, Mende,<sup>4</sup> and Thasos had resumed their previously interrupted issues; and so they too were minting in 431. The final region mentioned by Thucydides in his list is the islands between Peloponnese and Crete, again probably taken in a wide sense to include an area slightly larger than the Cyclades. In this area, we find no coins being

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<sup>3</sup>Phocaea stopped issuing silver coins during the fifth century, probably to preserve the Athenian monopoly in that sphere. But she was obviously allowed to go on minting electrum coins and may have been, like Cyzicus, one of Athens' centers for minting Thasian gold. (Head, *Ibid.*, 588-589).

issued at Aegina, Andros, Carthaea, Carystus, Coresia, Delos, Eretria, Iulis, Naxos, Paros, Seriphos, Siphnos, and Tenos--all of which had previously coined. Thera, though independent in 431, was soon badgered into paying tribute by the Athenians. It is interesting to note that Athens held almost complete sway in this territory, as compared with defaulters in other tribute areas. Hence we can in a sense understand her anger against Melos, which alone continued to defy her authority and remained independent and coining until 416.<sup>4</sup>

Hence we can see that Thucydides' list of allies and their relegation to their respective groupings as dependent or independent is well substantiated by numismatic evidence. We might even venture to assert that the numismatic picture in some respects affords us a clearer view of the condition of the Athenian Empire in 431, since it indicates where Athens' power was weak, i.e., in Lycia and Thrace, and where it was strongest, i.e., in the islands.

This was the state of the empire at the commencement of hostilities. At this point, it might be good for us to reiterate our purpose in this thesis--not to summarize the history of Thucydides in its entirety, but only those isolated parts which deal with the growth or decline of the Athenian Empire. Hence in the following, quite sketchy account of the war itself, we shall make no mention of such military activities as the Spartan invasions

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<sup>4</sup>The extent of the cessations in coinage among the dependent allies may be found in Robinson's tables.

of Attica or various Athenian reprisals, except where these actions might in some way affect the Empire. Thus we will make no attempt to sustain a continuous narrative of the war, but will merely strive to analyze a few somewhat scattered events.

In the first three years of the war, 431-429, little of consequence happened to the empire. The Aeginetans, already subjects of Athens since 456, were for security reasons expelled in 431 from their island; and their coinage, which had been slim for the past quarter-century, ceased entirely.<sup>5</sup> In 430, Potidaea in Thrace capitulated after a siege of two years. But this city was simply an ally in revolt and had issued no coins since 449.<sup>6</sup>

The next big item of interest to an investigator of the Athenian Empire in Thucydides is the Lesbian revolt, which began in 428. Immediately after the Spartans had staged their annual invasion of Attica in the spring, the whole island of Lesbos, except for Methymna,<sup>7</sup> revolted. This rebellion was not inspired

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<sup>5</sup>The fate of Aegina is mentioned in II, 27. Her coins of this time, besides being covered by the sources mentioned already in note 29 on page 37, are also treated in Jean Babelon, Catalogue de la Collection de Luynes: Monnaies Grecques (2 vols.; Paris, 1925), II, 109-112; Herbert Adolph Cahn, Griechische Münzen Archaischer Zeit (Basel, 1947), p. 4; Joseph Eckhel, Doctrina Numorum Veterum (8 vols.; Vindobonae, 1792-1839), II, 225; Ward, 80ff.

<sup>6</sup>Potidaea and her coinage are mentioned in Thucydides II, 70; Bury, 408; C. A. H., V, 205; Gardner, History, 280; Head, Ibid., 212. (I.e., only the last two sources refer to coinage.)

<sup>7</sup>Methymna had a special alliance with Athens, evidenced by the Athena-head coins which she continued to strike throughout the war. (Robinson, 331-332).

by any ill-treatment of the Lesbians by the Athenians; but the states on Lesbos, and especially Mitylene, wished to assert their freedom. The Lesbians had been listed in 431 by Thucydides as independent allies and, as a consequence, possessed a large fleet of their own. Like Thasos, some thirty-five years earlier, Lesbos had a good chance of succeeding in her revolt; but, because of the dilatory aid from the Peloponnesians, they could hold out against the Athenian siege for only one year.

Athens was vexed with the Lesbians. They had been allies on almost an equal footing with the Athenians and should have had no desire to revolt. Furthermore, they had chosen a particularly inopportune moment for their action, as far as Athens herself was concerned--when Attica was being menaced and when war funds were running low.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the Athenian assembly decided on the maximum penalty for the rebels: to kill all the adult males and to sell the rest of the population into slavery. On reconsideration, however, of this impassioned decision, they decided on a more clement course, namely that of taking over the island in the name of Athens and then renting the territory

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<sup>8</sup>Thucydides tells us in III, 19, 1-2 that the Athenians had to levy an extraordinary tribute to meet the added expenses of the Lesbian campaign. They sent twelve ships around to the various allies to collect more money. These vessels met with some success, except in Caria where the envoys were attacked and their leader killed. Meanwhile, at home, Athens, desperate with the length of siege, levelled her first *éscopd* or property tax to raise more funds for the prosecution of the war against the recalcitrant Lesbians.

back to the original Lesbian owners.<sup>9</sup>

Naturally, after the surrender and subjection of the island, Mitylene intermitted her abundant issues of both silver and electrum after 427. She would resume these only after being released from the Empire towards the end of the century.<sup>10</sup>

For the next six years, down to the end of the first decade of the war, most of the events touching on the Athenian Empire were small and comparatively insignificant. In 427, Notium, the port city of Colophon, revolted. It was quickly recaptured and then colonized by an Athenian commission. Notium, as a port city, had issued no coins herself, but had been employing the coins of Colophon, which had stopped after the Decree of Clearchus.<sup>11</sup>

Also in 427, the island of Minoa in front of Megara was captured and fortified by the Athenians; it was too small to issue coinage.<sup>12</sup> Corcyra too, one of the independent allies, was in a state of internal turmoil through dissension between the oligarchs,

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<sup>9</sup>The historical side of the Lesbian revolt is handled in Thucydides, III, 2-19 and 25-29; Bury, 413-417; C. A. H., V, 213-218; Charles Norris Cochrane, Thucydides and the Science of History (Oxford, 1929), 123-124; Hermann Müller-Strübing, Thukydideische Forschungen (Wien, 1881), 149-154.

<sup>10</sup>Sources on Mitylenian coinage are: Gardner, History, 253-255; Head, Ibid., 557-559; George MacDonald, The Evolution of Coin Types (Cambridge, 1916), pp. 14-15; Robinson, 331-332; Ward, 104-105; and Warwick Wroth, Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Troas, Aeolis, and Lesbos (London, 1894), pp. lxi-lxvii.

<sup>11</sup>Thucydides, III, 34; Head, Ibid., 569-570 form the bibliography for Notium.

<sup>12</sup>Minoa is mentioned in III, 51.

who were pro-Peloponnesian, and the democrats, who were pro-Athenian. The Athenian party eventually won out; and Corcyra remained independent as before.<sup>13</sup> In the same year, Plataea fell after a long siege; and her remaining citizens fled to Athens.<sup>14</sup> As mentioned above, though an independent ally, she was too small to issue her own coins. And, late in the summer, an Athenian fleet left for Sicily, ostensibly to help the natives of Leontini and their allies, who were Ionians, being oppressed by the Doric Syracusans.<sup>15</sup>

While in Sicily during the next year, 426, this fleet gained two new adherents to the Athenian cause. Messene and Mylae, a town belonging to the Messenians, submitted to Athenian troops. Since these cities revolted the very next year, we cannot tell whether or not their capture had any effect upon their coinage.<sup>16</sup>

The year 426 also marked an abortive attempt to capture Melos. An Athenian force landed and ravaged the island. But the Melians, safe in their walled city, defied the superior forces and retained their liberty. The Athenians soon withdrew.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Corcyra's sedition is treated in: III, 69-85; Bury, 419-421; C. A. H., V, 220-222.

<sup>14</sup>Plataea's last stand is recorded in III, 52-68; C. A. H., V, 219-220.

<sup>15</sup>III, 86.

<sup>16</sup>III, 90.

<sup>17</sup>III, 91.



In the same year, troubles broke out in Ambracia and Acarnania in the western part of Greece on either side of the Ambracian Gulf. The Athenians and the Peloponnesians intervened to help their favorite contestants. But soon, the Ambraciots, the allies of the Peloponnesians, were worsted. A treaty which provided for a peace of one hundred years' duration for this territory was then concluded; but the truce excluded Ambracian Anactorium.<sup>18</sup>

In the following year, 425, Messene and Mylae successfully revolted from Athens, being helped by Syracuse and other Lacedaemonian allies.<sup>19</sup> Then Anactorium was taken by the Athenians and the Acarnanians. But this city, which was situated just a few miles east from the later famous Actium, seems to have passed under the control of the Acarnanians and hence did not cease its coinage.<sup>20</sup>

Likewise in 425 sweeping changes were made in the Athenian tribute lists. Although no new crisis is implied by the Thucydidean narrative, the quota lists from the Acropolis tell us that the former exactions were in most instances doubled or even trebled at this time. Also about one hundred new names were added to the lists, including the formerly recalcitrant Melos.

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<sup>18</sup>The difficulties in Ambracia and Acarnania are treated in III, 102 and 105-114; Bury, 422-423; C. A. H., V, 227-230.

<sup>19</sup>The early defection of Messene and Mylae is told in IV, 1.

<sup>20</sup>The capture of Anactorium is mentioned in IV, 49; Bury, 425. The coins are referred to by Head, Ibid., 329.

This would seem to pose two difficulties with Thucydides' account. First, he implies in his treatment of the conquest of Melos in book five that the year 416 marked the first successful Athenian attempt to subdue that island. Secondly, Thucydides does not even hint at a reason why such excessive increases in tribute should have been demanded.

In solving the first of these problems, we should remark that the financial records of the Athenians are official documents; and hence their reliability as objective evidence would seem to be highly preferable to that of Thucydides. They would have no point to be gained by falsification, while the same could not be said of a literary historian. The solution to this difficulty is relatively simple. Neither the documents nor Thucydides are at fault. The documents merely record the assessment made and not necessarily its payment; thus there is no evidence that Melos ever paid at all. And it is generally assumed that many of the names added in 425 to the quota lists were just a matter of wishful thinking on the part of the Athenians and that those who were not forced to pay did not do so. Hence a record of assessment with no record of payment plus the continuing coinage of the island would hardly seem to indict Thucydides of fraud in any sense.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>The tribute lists of 425 are treated in Bury, 428-429; C. A. H., V, 236-237; Meritt, A. T. L., III, 288-289.

As to the second problem, the answer is again reasonably obvious. After seven seasons of unabated warfare, the Athenian finances would naturally be running low, supporting as they were at least three separate theaters of operation. Hence the revised tribute list need not surprise anyone. The fact that Thucydides does not mention the crisis, as he had the previous financial difficulties during the revolt of Lesbos, may stem from the fact that the additional money was raised through the ordinary channels of tribute, which he seldom mentions, while the Lesbian money had been obtained through an exceptional property tax of the Athenian people.

During the years 425 and 424, Athens began capturing small vantage points around the Peloponnese which would enable her raiders to strike deep into Spartan territory. She fortified ancient Pylos in 425 and took over the island of Cythera, slightly southeast of the Laconian Gulf, in 424. Pylos, of course, was not currently inhabited and issued no coins. Cythera did not begin to mint her own currency until the third century before Christ. Hence we are unable to verify either of these small acquisitions.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Pylos and Cythera might not be classified as belonging strictly to the Empire, since they were captured chiefly for strategic reasons. Cythera paid little tribute; Pylos could not. Pylos is treated in IV, 3 ff.; Bury, 429-438; C. A. H., V, 230-235. Cythera is treated in IV, 53-57; Bury, 438; C. A. H., V, 238-239; her coins in Head, Ibid., 436.

Beginning also in 424, when the supreme strategist of Sparta, the general Brasidas, began his operations in the regions around Thrace, the Athenians suffered a series of reverses in this northern area. First, Acanthus and Stagira, fired by Spartan promises of aid, staged successful revolts in 424. Acanthus, whose strength had probably given it special consideration with regard to the Decree of Clearchus, since it had never stopped minting, went off the Attic standard at this time and adopted the Phoenician standard for its bull-and-lion coins. This standard was much more useful for trade with the East, especially in the face of the waning power of Athens in the northern area. Stagira did not resume her coinage until the fourth century.<sup>23</sup>

At this point in his narrative, Thucydides relates another Athenian attempt to gain Boeotia, which failed.<sup>24</sup>

Before the year 424 was over, the historian himself makes his principal appearance in the pages of his history, in connection with further events in the Thracian region. The Spartan Brasidas, together with his newly acquired northern allies, made an expedition against Amphipolis, an Athenian colony on the river Strymon, a few miles inland from Eion.<sup>25</sup> Both Eion and Amphipolis were at this time the responsibility of the general Thucydides, the commander of the northern district, who was stationed at

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<sup>23</sup>Acanthus and Stagira are treated in IV, 81-88; Bury, 446-447; C. A. H., V, 244; Acanthus' coins in Head, Ibid., 204-205.

<sup>24</sup>IV, 89-101.

<sup>25</sup>For Eion's capture, confer page 26.

Thasos--a distance of half a day away by boat. One cold, snowy night, Brasidas found the bridge to Amphipolis not well guarded and the city generally unprepared for an attack. He quickly manned the bridge and proceeded to assault the town itself. The people at once sent out a message to Thucydides to come to their rescue. He sailed immediately after receiving the news and arrived at the mouth of the Strymon on the evening of the next day.

Meanwhile, the people of Amphipolis, unaware that Thucydides was so near at hand with help, had surrendered to Brasidas. Thucydides, however, managed to preserve Eion by his timely arrival, a few short hours before Brasidas marched there too. It was the disgrace attendant on the loss of the Athenian Amphipolis through insufficient guarding that caused the exile of Thucydides and was indirectly responsible for the writing of the history that we possess.<sup>26</sup>

Because Amphipolis was a colony of the Athenians themselves, it had utilized the regular Athenian money before this date. And now in 424, even after its autonomy--for Sparta did not make it a Spartan subject, but allowed it freedom, i.e., freedom to

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<sup>26</sup>Brasidas was a clever general. He knew that Thucydides was in the neighborhood and that he had the right of working the gold mines in that part of Thrace (inherited from Olorus, his father) and hence probably possessed some influence with the natives of cities around Amphipolis, and, as a result, would be able to collect a sizable force to oppose him.

Therefore Brasidas struck quickly, offered easy terms, and accepted the surrender of Amphipolis while its people were still somewhat irresolute.

fight with Sparta--it did not begin immediately to strike coins. Only after its independence was definitely established by the treaty of Nicias in 421, did it begin the issue of the beautiful Arethusa-head pieces, which have won universal acclaim for their high artistic value.<sup>27</sup>

After these losses, Athens was beginning to become worried about the future of the northern section of her Empire. And so, to have time to strengthen her position, she concluded in the spring of 423 a one-year truce with Sparta. Athens hoped in this way to be able to make leisurely preparations to regain her lost territory in Thrace, while Brasidas would be hindered from fomenting any further revolts. And, on the other hand, Sparta hoped that perhaps during the course of the year Athens would be willing to negotiate a peace treaty of longer duration.<sup>28</sup>

But before the news of the truce reached the north, Brasidas had already helped Scione to revolt. The Athenians claimed that the rebellion had taken place after the actual date of the armistice and demanded that the town be handed back. Brasidas, insisting that the revolt had taken place before the treaty, refused. And Mende, a town on the same peninsula, encouraged by

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<sup>27</sup>Amphipolis is mentioned in IV, 102-108; Bury, 447-448; C. A. H., V, 244-245; Cavaignac, L'Economie Grecque (Paris, 1951), p. 93. Its coins are treated in Gardner, History, 274-280; Head, Ibid., 214-217.

<sup>28</sup>The truce of 423 is mentioned in IV, 117-119; Bury, 450-451; C. A. H., V, 246.

Brasidas' resolute stand, took this opportunity to join in the revolt. Brasidas accepted this town into the Spartan alliance, charging at the same time that the Athenians had violated the truce in other matters.

At this juncture, the future of the northern Empire might have taken an entirely different turn, had not Brasidas been called away to battle some native Macedonians further to the north. Deprived of help, Mende once more fell into Athenian hands; and Scione was circumvallated and held in a state of siege by an Athenian guard. It fell about two years later, and an angry Athens slew all its males and enslaved the women and children. For its brief period of freedom, however, it resumed its minting which it had stopped in 449. Mende, however, even after its present troubles with the imperial city, continued its coinage privileges; but it had always employed the Attic standard, and this might explain some of Athens' leniency towards it.<sup>29</sup>

In 422, when the truce of the preceding year had formally expired, Cleon, the general responsible for the signal Athenian success at Pylos three years earlier, led an expedition to recover Amphipolis. In the subsequent battle for possession of the city, both he and Brasidas were killed.<sup>30</sup> Thus, although the Athenian

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<sup>29</sup>Scione and Mende are referred to in IV, 120-129; Bury, 451-452; C. A. H., V, 246-247. Their coins are treated in Robinson, 332-335.

<sup>30</sup>The battle at Amphipolis in 422 is mentioned in V, 6-11; Bury, 453-455; C. A. H., V, 248.

troops were routed, the Peloponnesian victory amounted to a practical defeat because of the death of their leader. Also, with the death of Cleon, the war party at Athens was considerably weakened; and the peace faction, with Nicias at their head, was easily able to conclude a more lasting treaty in the following year.

This treaty of 421, which was supposed to inaugurate an era of peace which would last for fifty years, had the following terms affecting the Empire: (1) Athens would restore Pylos, Cythera, and a few other small posts to Sparta, but would retain Anactorium, Nisaea, and Sollion; (2) Sparta would restore Amphipolis, Stagira, Acanthus, and some other small towns in Thrace to Athens; (3) Boeotia would restore the fortress of Panacton to the Athenians; (4) the towns mentioned in section two above would remain independent, but would pay tribute to Athens.<sup>31</sup>

But it was obvious at once that this peace could not be durable. Three large and important states in the Peloponnesian alliance rejected the terms of the agreement. Corinth did not like the idea of Anactorium, her colony, being kept by the Athenians. Boeotia did not want to surrender Panacton with nothing gained in return. Megara did not fancy her port Nisaea remaining in Athenian hands. Furthermore, the Chalcidians refused to surrender Amphipolis; so most of the conditions of the

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<sup>31</sup>For the complete terms of this treaty confer V, 17-20.



original treaty bogged down.<sup>32</sup>

Sparta, however, was anxious, to get back her prisoners from the battle of Sphacteria, where 292 of her men had surrendered to the Athenians. She was also eager to put aside all enmity with Athens because her treaty with Argos, her old rival on the Peloponnese, was soon to run out; and she did not relish the idea of having to wage two all-out wars. Athens, on the other hand, wanted an end of Spartan tampering in her Empire. So the two states made a separate treaty: Athens agreed to exchange captives with Sparta, but kept Pylos and Cythera. With this alliance, which was also supposed to last fifty years, ended the first ten years of war.<sup>33</sup>

The treaty was reasonably successful in maintaining peace for a period of about five years. During this time Sparta and Argos clashed at the battle of Mantinea in 418, where the Athenians aided the Argives. Both were routed by the Spartans. After this defeat, a revision was made in the government of Argos; and that state's new foreign policy was responsible for an alliance with Sparta. With the addition of this new, powerful ally, Sparta regained some of her prestige lost at Sphacteria; and many of the other towns among her friends in the Peloponnese, who had refused to support her in her treaty of 421, began once

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<sup>32</sup>For the rejection of the first treaty, confer V, 22.

<sup>33</sup>For the final treaty confer V, 22-25. For both treaties, see also Bury, 455-459; C. A. H., V, 249-256.

more to rally behind her.<sup>34</sup>

Then, in the year 416, occurred the Melian affair. As has been remarked earlier in this chapter, Melos was at this time the one island in the Cyclades that was still standing firm against the domination of Athens. Its solitary aloofness was regarded by the Athenians with mixed feelings of indignation and hatred. They felt that it stood as a bad example to the other islands, who might be encouraged by its independent existence to bolt from their roles as dutiful subjects.

At this point in the narrative, Thucydides entertains us with that literary masterpiece which has become known as the Melian Dialogue. In that interchange of speeches, supposedly recorded when prior to invasion the Athenian envoys had forewarned the Melians of the advantages of a bloodless surrender of their island, he skillfully portrays the arguments and emotions on both sides. The Athenian  $\psi\phi\phi\varsigma$  exhibited on this occasion has often been interpreted as the tragic flaw of the main characters of this Thucydidean tragedy;<sup>35</sup> and the Melians fruitlessly appealed to moral arguments of justice and right to stay the hands of the empire builders.

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<sup>34</sup>Also in 417, Athens made another unsuccessful attempt to regain Amphipolis (V, 83). A minor revolt of Dion on Mt. Athos also occurred (V, 82); but this town did not issue coins, and Thucydides tells us nothing of the outcome of the revolt.

<sup>35</sup>Confer John H. Finley, Jr., Thucydides (Cambridge, 1942), pp. 321 ff. for a balanced treatment of the element of tragedy in the historian's narrative.

Unfortunately for the Melians, the Spartans at this time were still conscientiously observing the truce and thus did not wish to help the islanders, though they were originally Lacedaemonian colonists. The hapless city was surrounded, besieged, and taken. As on other auspicious occasions, the Athenians massacred all the adult males and sold the weaker inhabitants as slaves. They then proceeded to colonize the island themselves.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, after 416, the old pomegranate civic coinage of Melos, the only vestige of independence left in the islands, disappeared. It would be resumed, however, after 400, when Lysander restored a remnant of the original population to their home.<sup>37</sup>

Recapitulating the events of the years 431-416, commonly spoken of as the Archidamian War and the Peace of Nicias, is not any easy task. Many happenings which touched upon the Empire were too small to leave an impression on coinage, e.g., the fall of Plataea, the revolt of Notium, the capture of Minoa, Cythera, and Pylos. And other events were of too brief duration to achieve any such effect, e.g., the domination over Messene and Mylae in Sicily. Yet, nonetheless, certain occurrences did leave their traces in coinage--the depopulation of Aegina, the revolt of Lesbos, the secession of Acanthus, the successful struggle of Amphi-

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<sup>36</sup>The history of Melos is related in V, 84-116; Bury, 462-463; C. A. H., V, 281; Cochrane, 113-114.

<sup>37</sup>The coins of Melos are listed in Gardner, History, 244-246; Head, Ibid., 486-487; Robinson, 329 and 336; Weil, 362-364.

polis for independence, and the crushing of Melos. And once again we may state that the numismatic evidence does not contradict the account of Thucydides, but even in some instances, e.g., the relative power of Athens in certain areas in 431, and the tribute increases of 425, supplements the historical narrative.

## CHAPTER V

### THE HISTORY OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE: 416-411 B.C.

εἰ δέ τις ὑπέροκτα χερ-  
σὶν ἢ λόγῳ πορεύεται,  
δαίκας ἀφόβητος, οὐδὲ  
δαιμόνων ἔδη σέβων,  
κακὰ νιν ἔλοιτο μοῖρα  
δυσπότην χάριν χλιδαῖς.

--Sophocles, Oedipus Rex,  
883-888.

During the winter of 416/5, the Athenian people were feeling confident after their recent triumph at Melos. Throughout six years of peace their revenues had continued to pile up until their treasury now possessed a considerable surplus. Under these conditions they felt safe in disobeying Pericles' wise counsel<sup>1</sup> not to expand their Empire during war. For they were not even sure that they could be said to be at war, since the treaty with Sparta had been effective over such a long period of time.

The opportunity for the Athenians to use their savings came towards the end of 416. Segesta, a city in Sicily, had been at war with her more powerful southern neighbor, Selinus. Coming off second best in the contest did not please the Segestians, so they decided to call on the Athenians for help. They got the

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<sup>1</sup>II, 65, 7.

democrats from Leontini, the former allies of the Athenians who had been responsible for the earlier imperial expedition to the island in 427, to back their petition and sent a legation to Athens requesting aid. At the same time, they offered to pay any expenses that an Athenian expedition might incur.

As a result of this visit, Athenian envoys were sent out to investigate the financial position of the Segestians, to ascertain whether or not they could afford to support a full-fledged Athenian expedition in the manner to which they had become accustomed. The Athenian exploratory envoys were entertained lavishly in Segesta and returned home bearing tales of untold wealth. It was only later that the Athenians discovered that many of the solid gold vessels seen in the temples were really gilt silver and that the sumptuous service used in the homes of the private citizens of Segesta had been passed from house to house between entertainments on each night. Furthermore, the Segestians had borrowed from many of the neighboring cities in Sicily silver and gold vessels to impress the Athenian emissaries. The ruse worked. The Athenians fitted out 134 triremes and an even larger number of smaller attendant vessels and sailed westward for what looked like a glorious chance to expand their Empire.

It is hard to see how such an expedition could have failed so completely and so miserably. The Sicilians and especially the Syracusans, on whom the brunt of the defensive war eventually evolved, were not prepared for war and could hardly have had on

hand anywhere near the resources that Athens could muster. But fail the expedition did. It lingered for over two years on the island and finally perished in its entirety, dragging with it even more numerous reinforcements both of ships and men that had been sent out from Attica from time to time.

Several reasons, however, can be pointed out for this failure. There was, of course, the actual poverty of the Segestians, discovered only after the expeditionary force had made the long journey. Then, the Italian allies of the Athenians, on whose help they had been counting to some extent, refused to embroil themselves in a war against Selinus and Syracuse. Then too, a large portion of the blame could be fixed on Nicias, the commanding general for the greater part of the campaign. As we saw in the last chapter, Nicias was a member of the peace party; and he was highly reluctant to embark on the enterprise even when the Athenian people had elected him a general. His co-commander, the young Alcibiades, was supposed to provide the spark for the forces; but he was recalled to Athens early in the campaign to stand trial for the mutilation of the Hermae and fled to Sparta when he found that he was more than likely to be condemned. Nicias, left in charge of the expedition, asserted his cautious nature only enough to take smaller cities like Catana and deferred the attack on Syracuse, the main objective, until that city had built up an adequate defense. And even when he eventually did invest the city, he delayed action until the Syracusans had

built a counter-wall around him and there was no longer any hope of victory. The final piece of hesitation on his part came when an unpropitious eclipse of the moon occurred on the night when he should have evacuated his troops by boat from his surrounded fortifications; this last delay cost Athens the whole Sicilian force and afforded Syracuse its unparalleled victory in 413.<sup>2</sup>

Some aspects of the Sicilian campaign are reflected in the island's coinage of the period. Syracuse at its lowest ebb, when surrounded by Athenian and hostile Sicilian forces,<sup>3</sup> was forced to issue what is commonly termed gold money of necessity, that is, coins put out by melting down temple vessels--a last resort in a city that normally issued silver.<sup>4</sup> Then, after its decisive victory, it celebrated its triumph by issuing beautiful silver pieces, which deserve to rank among the finest in the artistic world and which call to mind the even more skillfully executed Demareteia issued by the city after Himera in 480. These ten-drachm medallions, with their heads of Persephone, their lifelike four-horse chariots, and the water-nymph Arethusa encircled by dolphins, were done by the Sicilian artists Cimon and Evaenetus, who Bury says "may claim to stand in the same rank as Phidias."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The history of the Sicilian expedition is treated in Thucydides VI-VII; Bury, 477-485; C. A. H., V, 282-311.

<sup>3</sup>VII, 48, 5.

<sup>4</sup>The same thing would happen to a besieged Athens some six years later.

<sup>5</sup>p. 484.



Head spends two full pages describing these masterpieces.<sup>6</sup>

Two other cities in Sicily likewise reflect an interesting change in their coinage at this time. Catana, which Thucydides tells us was one of the Athenian bases of operations against Syracuse, minted after its capture in 415 some of its finest coins during the Athenian occupation.<sup>7</sup> And even Segesta seems to have put forth some of its best coins with many striking varieties between the years 415 and 409; some would see here the hand of a borrowed Athenian artist at work.<sup>8</sup>

During his narrative of the Sicilian expedition, Thucydides gives us a list of the allies of the Empire who were fighting with the Athenians before Syracuse. This document is too lengthy to quote here in its entirety because the historian intersperses some commentary along with many of the names. We can, however, quote the individual districts mentioned by Thucydides as allies at this time and confer their coinage records to whether we can substantiate his list as we did for the one of 431 in chapter

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<sup>6</sup>The coins of Syracuse are treated in Comparetti, 28-29; Gardner, History, 405; Head, Historia Numorum, 171-178; G. F. Hill, Historical Greek Coins (London, 1906), p. 54; MacDonald, Coin Types, 9; C. T. Seltman, Masterpieces, 18-20; Alfred von Sallet, Die Antiken Münzen (Berlin, 1909), pp. 15-18.

<sup>7</sup>The coins of Catana are discussed in Gardner, Ibid., 282-284; Head, Ibid., 132-133.

<sup>8</sup>The coins of Segesta are mentioned in Gardner, Ibid., 284-285; Head, Ibid., 164-167.

four.<sup>9</sup>

He first mentions the Lemnians and Imbrians, two islands in the Thracian tribute area. Lemnos struck no coins after the Persian wars until out from under Athenian domination towards the beginning of the fourth century. Imbros did not begin coining until the fourth century, so we can verify nothing from her issues. Then Thucydides lists the people from Aegina and Hestiaeae, who were Athenian colonists since the original inhabitants had been expelled from these places in 431 and 446 respectively; both had ceased to issue coins after their depopulation, as we mentioned in the preceding chapters.

The next group listed--the Eretrians, Chalcidians, Styrians, and Carystians--were all from Euboea. They had issued no coins after the suppression of their revolt in 446, as previously mentioned. But, in 411, after becoming united and with promised Spartan aid, they would revolt; and Eretria would inaugurate a series of federal coinage for the whole island.

The Ceans, Andrians, and Tenians were from the islands. The Ceans had switched to the Attic standard after 449; and, except for the festival coins for Triopian Apollo, which we alluded to before, they ceased minting. They would resume on their old standard in the fourth century. After 480, the Andrians and the Tenians issued no coins during the period of Athenian supremacy in the Aegean.

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<sup>9</sup>The list of allies before Syracuse is in VII, 57, 2-11.

The Milesians, Samians, and Chians were from Ionia. The Milesians had been permitted by the Athenians to issue small coins for local circulation only during most of the fifth century. They would begin issuing larger denominations again in the fourth century. The Samians had a special coinage arrangement with the Athenians, as we noted after their rebellion in 440-439. The Chians, as Thucydides reminds us in this passage, supplied ships and were independent. Hence there is no trace of Athenian domination on the coinage of this island.

The Methymnaeans, Tenedians, and the people from Aenos were all Aeolians. The Methymnaeans, the one group on Lesbos that had remained faithful to Athens, issued little (if any) coinage during the period from 420 to 405, probably finding it more convenient to use Athenian coin. They supplied ships and always retained the right of coinage, even if they did not always exercise it. We noted above that the head of Athena sometimes appeared on their coins. The Tenedians issued no coins from 480 until the fourth century. The city of Aenos had not minted from 449 to 439 because of the decree, but had been allowed to resume coinage after 439 with other cities of the north.

The Rhodians are here grouped together, although they were not federated until 409--the official date for the founding of the city of Rhodes. Camirus had issued didrachms and drachms on the Aeginetan standard, but had ceased minting around 465 when Athenian ascendancy in southwest Asia Minor was at its height

after the battle of Eurymedon. Lindus had formerly minted on the Phoenician standard, but, under Attic supremacy, issued only a few hemidrachms and obols of Athenian weight. Ialysus had also employed the Phoenician standard in the sixth century; and it is doubtful whether it issued any staters after 465. All in all, coinage on the island was very scarce during the Athenian Empire.

The Cytherians lived on a small island and, as noted before, issued coins only during the third and second centuries. The Cephallenians and Zacynthians went as independent allies and hence showed no coinage restrictions. Cephallenia used the coins of Corcyra, and the coins of Zacynthus show no break during this period. The Corcyreans had always been strong independent allies of Athens, and their coins are continuous from 585. The Messenians from Naupactus and Pylos used Athenian coins, as mentioned earlier, out of gratitude to their benefactors.

The next groups listed were for the most part volunteers or mercenaries and do not reflect any determinate policy of their native city--the exiles from Megara, Argives, Mantineans, Arcadians, Cretans, and Aetolians. No reflection of their movements would be visible in numismatics. The Thurians and Metapontians both went only because they were forced to by party dissensions within their own cities; and, if they refused, Athens might come and take over the towns completely during their faction. They retained their sovereignty by their cooperation, and no break in the coinage of either is noted.

Of the Sicilians who were Greeks, the Naxians and Catanians are listed. The Naxians do not seem to have been molested by the Athenians, although they did begin new local issues in 415. The Catanians have been treated amply above on page 83. Of the Sicilians who were barbarians, the Segestians were noted above on page 83; and the Sicels are a rather indeterminate group of towns--the statement of Thucydides is indefinite. It is probably true that none of the more primitive inhabitants of Sicily minted at this date, as might be inferred from Head's treatment of Sicily in Historia Numorum.<sup>10</sup>

The final groups mentioned by Thucydides are again fragmentary and would have had no influence on the coinage of their respective cities. So the Tyrrhenians and Iapygians who participated in the siege of Syracuse must remain unverified from our present standpoint.<sup>11</sup>

Yet all these allies achieved nothing in Sicily. Many of them perished with their Athenian leaders; and the few towns that they had won passed back once more into the hands of the anti-Athenian Sicilians. The Athenians themselves had suffered severe losses. Well over two hundred of their ships had been burned or

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<sup>10</sup>pp. 114-191.

<sup>11</sup>The chief source for the verification of the list of allies is B. V. Head, Historia Numorum, where articles on each of the cities are listed separately. Additional sources for Chios can be found on page 60, note 2. Head's account of Rhodes was supplemented by Gardner's History, 255-256.

sunk, and their manpower was permanently impaired.

Meanwhile, back in Greece, Alcibiades had deserted to the Spartans. There he aided their cause by suggesting that they fortify Decelleia, a small town about thirty miles north of Athens. This place would afford a haven for runaway slaves from the Athenian silver mines at Laurium, since they could reach it in a single night. In this way, the necessary manpower for Athens' coin output could be diminished; and her war effort would become seriously crippled. Sparta followed this advice of Alcibiades and fortified Decelleia in March 413. The cruelly treated slaves hastened to this station; and, by the end of that year, the mines at Laurium, for all practical purposes, had ceased to operate.<sup>12</sup>

With the Spartans thus harassing the Athenians at Decelleia, the news of the utter destruction of the land and sea forces at Sicily reached Athens. The populace was for a time incredulous, refusing to believe that such a doom could have befallen what had seemed an almost invincible contingent. When finally they were convinced, they wasted no time on self-pity, but at once set about building more ships and preparing to defend their Empire to the end.<sup>13</sup>

The next year, 412, found most of the Athenian subjects

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<sup>12</sup>Decelleia is mentioned in Thucydides chiefly in VI, 91, 6; VII, 19, 1; and VII, 27. It is also treated in Bury, 485; Gardner, History, 231-232.

<sup>13</sup>VIII, 1-4.

ready to revolt. Alcibiades and the Spartans, who were no longer so concerned with keeping the truce with a weakened Athens, were more than anxious to make the most of this disposition which was becoming prevalent in the Empire. So Alcibiades and Chalcideus, a Spartan general, toured the Aegean world that year, inducing Chios, Clazomenae, and Miletus to revolt from the Athenians. Chios in turn convinced the whole island of Lesbos to rebel, including both Mitylene and Methymna.<sup>14</sup>

Athens acted quickly. She came unexpectedly and swiftly won back Mitylene, Methymna, and Clazomenae. But then Cnidus, apprised of the fact that a large Peloponnesian fleet was in the area, also revolted. And the Chians, as yet unchecked, sailed to Camirus on Rhodes and stirred up the whole island to revolt before Athens could arrive to stem the tide.<sup>15</sup>

These events of 412 were to some extent mirrored in the contemporary coinage.<sup>16</sup> Of course, Methymna, Mitylene, and Clazomenae had been free for too short a time to permit any changes in this regard. Chios, always an independent ally, had been

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<sup>14</sup>In book eight, Thucydides treats the revolts of these cities in the following chapters: Chios (14), Clazomenae (14, 23), Miletus (17), Lesbos (22, 23).

<sup>15</sup>The recapture of Clazomenae and Lesbos are mentioned in VIII, 23. The revolt of Cnidus is given in VIII, 35 and that of Rhodes in VIII, 44. Bury treats these and the preceding revolts on pages 487-488; C. A. H. in V, 312-315.

<sup>16</sup>Ephesus also revolted either now or a year or two earlier, as she begins issuing coins again. This is found in Gardner, History, 257-258; Head, Historia, 571-573; Robinson, 330-331.

issuing throughout the fifth century, but her output seems to increase in volume during the last fifteen years or so of the century. Cnidus resumed her coins in 412 on the Phoenician standard, after thirty-seven years of issuing on the Attic. At the same time, we know that Cyme must also have revolted during 412, from her resumption of her eagle coinage; Thucydides does not mention her revolt, though he implies that it was already a free city in VIII, 31, 4. Rhodes did not take advantage of her freedom at once, but started to issue coins only after the federal union of her three principal cities three years later.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, in the spring of 411, the last year of the war narrated by Thucydides, the Athenian Empire was intact only in its northern regions and the Hellespont. All that remained of importance around the western coast of Asia Minor was Lesbos, Samos, Cos, and Halicarnassus. Furthermore, Athens was faced with the harsh reality of a strong Peloponnesian fleet operating openly in the Aegean, supported by a still hostile Persia and even by some Sicilian recruits, who had recently become interested in the outcome of this war in the East.

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<sup>17</sup>The coinage of the cities revolting in 412 are treated in the following: (1) Chios--Giesecke, 68-75; Friedrich Imhoof-Blumer, Zur Griechischen und Römischen Münzkunde (Geneva, 1908), pp. 79-80; Ward, 109-110; besides the sources in note 2, page 60; (2) Clazomenae--Head, Historia, 567; (3) Miletus--Gardner, History, 257; Head, Ibid., 584-585; (4) Lesbos, la. Methymna and Mitylene--confer note 7, page 63 and note 10, page 65; (5) Cnidus--Gardner, Ibid., 258; Head, Ibid., 614-615; Robinson, 337; (6) Rhodes, Gardner, Ibid., 255-256; Head, Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Caria, Cos, Rhodes, etc. (London, 1897), pp. c-clii; (7) Cyme--Head, Historia Numorum, 551-552.



Late in the spring even the little left to Athens began to revolt. In the Hellespont, Abydus went over to the Persians and was followed two days later by Lampsacus. Once again the Athenians sailed quickly and retook Lampsacus, but failed to recapture Abydus,<sup>18</sup> which from that year began its famous representations of Nike, Apollo, and Artemis in gold--the chief monetary exchange of the Persian world.<sup>19</sup>

In June 411, there was trouble in the city of Athens itself. The populace was becoming dissatisfied with the way in which the war was being conducted under the democracy. An oligarchic insurrection took place, and little resistance was offered to the new government of the Four Hundred. But, instead of solving the difficulties rampant in the vanishing Empire, the new government only increased them. As the democrats had done before them, the oligarchs favored their own brand of government in all the states under their control and so set up commissions to go around to the subject cities and establish oligarchies in each one.

The oligarchs held office only until September.<sup>20</sup> But in the space of three months, they had managed to do sufficient damage. The new oligarchy which they had established on Samos compromised the loyalty of that state for a time; but the Samians

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<sup>18</sup>Abydus and Lampsacus are treated in VIII, 62.

<sup>19</sup>For the coins of Abydus, confer Head, Historia, 538-539.

<sup>20</sup>The arrival of the Four Hundred in Athens is described in VIII, 67 ff.

themselves, who seemed to be the most faithful of the Athenian allies throughout the fifth and even into the fourth century, righted the governmental difficulties themselves. For a time, in fact, while the oligarchs were still in control of Athens and attempting to make peace with the Spartans, the Athenian fleet and the Samians considered themselves as the only true Athenians and set up their own distinctive coinage--Athenian tetradrachms with the head of Athena and with a small Samian bull's head in front of the traditional owl on the reverse.<sup>21</sup>

Though Thucydides makes no explicit mention of a revolt on Thasos at this date, it might easily be inferred both from the stability of the oligarchic government there even after the democratic restoration at Athens and from the new gold coinage<sup>22</sup> beginning in 411--an indication of friendship with the Persians.<sup>23</sup>

A short time later, Byzantium revolted again; and, from the year 411, she began minting her well-known iron coins.<sup>24</sup>

Closer to home, an uprising on Euboea thoroughly frightened

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<sup>21</sup>The difficulties at Samos are mentioned in VIII, 72-77; Bury, 494; C. A. H., V, 333-334. Their coins are treated in E. S. G. Robinson, "Tell El-Mashkute Hoard of Athenian Tetradrachms," The Numismatic Chronicle, 6th Series, VI (1946-1947), 118-119, and Seltman, Greek Coins, 147-148.

<sup>22</sup>These were Thasos' first issues in gold, despite her large interests in the Pangaeian mines.

<sup>23</sup>The difficulties at Thasos are treated in VIII, 64.

<sup>24</sup>Byzantium's revolt is mentioned in VIII, 80; her coinage is treated in Head, Ibid., 263-268 and Poole, 93-105.

the Athenians. During the summer months they had already endured difficulties with Samos, Thasos, and Byzantium; and now the fact that the large island directly to the north of Attica was menaced by rebellion urged them to action. It was at this time that they took definite steps towards a more stable government at home, expelling the Four Hundred, recalling Alcibiades from exile, and setting up a new democratic constitution, frequently referred to as the Constitution of Theramenes, which Thucydides praises highly.<sup>25</sup>

The revolt on Euboea, however, was evidently successful. Beginning in 411, a series of federal coinage began at Eretria which would continue down through the next century.<sup>26</sup>

After the Euboean affair, Thucydides ends his narrative swiftly with two rays of hope for the Athenian cause. Shortly after this event, an Athenian fleet won a naval battle at Cynossema, which greatly raised the spirits of the people.<sup>27</sup> Then Cyzicus, which had ventured to revolt also, was repressed and fined.<sup>28</sup> Thus the historian closes his account of the fifth

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<sup>25</sup>The history of Euboea is treated in VIII, 95-96; Bury, 495-496; C. A. H., V, 338. The Constitution of Theramenes can be documented in Aristotle's The Constitution of the Athenians, XXIX-XXXIII; it is mentioned by Thucydides in VIII, 97, 2. Confer also Stevenson, "The Constitution of Theramenes," JHS, LVI (1936), 48-57.

<sup>26</sup>The coins of Euboea are described in Gardner, Ibid., 247; Head, Ibid., 355-357.

<sup>27</sup>Cynossema is treated in VIII, 104-105; Bury, 496; C. A. H., V 341-342.

<sup>28</sup>Cyzicus is mentioned in VIII, 107. The brief freedom of the city did not result in any coin change.

century with two Athenian victories against the dim background of a decaying Empire.

By way of brief summary of the evidence in this chapter, we might mention the following data. The Syracusan expedition left its mark on the coinage of Sicily: in the gold "necessity" money and in the later silver commemorative coins of Syracuse itself, in the altered styles of the currency of Catana and Segesta. The greater part of the long list of the allies in VII, 57 was verified through a brief perusal of their coinage. Deceleia, of course, had no immediate effect on Athenian money; but it would a few years later, when the reserves on the Acropolis would run out in 408/7.

Among the towns in revolt in 412 and 411, we could trace definite influences in the coinage of Chios, Cnidus, Cyme, Abydos, Samos, Thasos, Byzantium, and Euboea. Rhodes did not begin to issue until after a few years had passed. Furthermore, resumption in Cyme (and also in Ephesus) helps us to fill in Thucydides' account, which is probably quite selective in this description of the disintegration of the Empire. And, while the evidence is not always as clear or as full as we might like it to be, still it in no way contradicts the account of the historian.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VALIDITY OF THUCYDIDES' ANALYSIS OF THE MORALITY OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE

κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα  
ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται.

--Thucydides, I, 22, 4.

We have now completed our discussion of the history of the Athenian Empire as related by Thucydides and as reflected in numismatics. We therefore wish to return once again to the problem posed in chapter one and try to solve it in the light of the historical evidence seen thus far. In the present chapter, then, we will attempt to answer three chief questions revolving around our problem: (1) was Thucydides' approach to the Athenian Empire completely objective or did his literary flair lead him to omit certain facts which were historically pertinent; (2) in the narrative does such historical necessity appear as would actually force the Athenians to take the course of action that they did and hence validate their moral apologia; and (3) were the proposed Athenian views on morals actually shared by Thucydides. These three main points will constitute the material of this chapter.

To answer the first question on Thucydides' objectivity, we need not spend much time in re-reviewing the history of the Empire. We need only remark that in our present study we have in

general uncovered a surprising amount of substantiation for Thucydides' narrative. We have been able to find numismatic affirmation for roughly eighty-five percent of the incidents mentioned by the historian; and many of the other events, such as the assemblies at Sparta in 432 and the capture of small cities like Plataea, were not likely to leave their mark upon coinage. On the other hand, we nowhere ran across any contradiction between Thucydides and coinage, except for a seeming difficulty when Melos' name appeared on the revised Athenian tribute lists from 425. Our main concern at this point is with those events that numismatics has related and which Thucydides has for some reason or other omitted from his account. Among such facts are the capture of Lycia and Ephesus in or around 469 and their revolt around 413, the transfer of the Delian treasury to Athens in 454, the Decree of Clearchus in 449, the softening of the imperial policy in the northern regions around 439, the greatly increased tribute in 425, and the revolt of Cyme in 412.

Why did Thucydides leave these events out of his narrative? We cannot, of course, penetrate to his subjective reasoning in this matter; but we must attempt to approximate his thoughts on the subject. We will never know for certain whether the omissions were intentional or not. We must satisfy ourselves with stating simply that he might have or should have known about these facts and that he might have or should have included them in his account.

Before attempting a subjective analysis, however, let us

take a brief look at the omitted matter itself. A certain amount of it can be designated as irrelevant before we begin our inquiry. The gain and loss of Lycia and Ephesus in the fifth century would hardly be considered of first-rate strategic importance, and Thucydides should not be expected to include the acquisition of every city in his narrative. But it may be argued that he mentions the capture of Eion, Scyros, and Carystus just before the original date of the fall of Ephesus. These cities, however, were brought into the narrative for a special reason--not because of their own relative importance, but because of their significance as steps in the transition from confederacy to empire, the first steps in an ever-changing policy of the Athenians.

Nor similarly would the revolt of Cyme be of major importance. And actually, as noted above on page 90, we cannot say that Thucydides entirely neglects the fall of Cyme, since he definitely implies it in a later passage. Also, the changing of the imperial policy in the Thracian area in 439 was not widespread in its effects; the right of coinage was probably restored to less than ten cities (we know of four). The historian could scarcely be blamed for leaving out events like these.

But the other three omissions are not as easy to explain away, because of their relative importance. The transfer of the treasury, the decree of 449, and the sweeping alterations in the tribute were significant events in the history of the Empire.

Why should Thucydides choose to neglect them? A variety of answers could be proposed, some of which we have already seen.

Were the events in themselves too well known so that a re-telling of them would seem almost banal? This is highly doubtful. Thucydides does not fail to recount other well-known incidents, as the Melian attack and the siege of Syracuse. A historian is not inclined to omit an event because it is too important.

The most obvious answer to the problem is the one that Cornford and his associates prefer, namely that Thucydides leaves these events out because they do not fit in with his proposed scheme--a eulogy of Athens' former greatness. Yet would any man who was trying to cover up some of the more savory details of his country's past go to the trouble of relating the many massacres and depopulations perpetrated by his nation? Would he allow the leading statesman of his land and the chief founder of the Empire to refer baldly to that institution as "tyranny"?<sup>1</sup> Would he portray such inhumane and uncivilized passions in his glorious people as he puts into the mouths of the Athenian spokesmen in the celebrated Melian dialogue?<sup>2</sup> A man attempting to enlist the sympathies of his hearers for the Empire would hardly enliven his narrative with these choice

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<sup>1</sup>Confer note 7, page 7.

<sup>2</sup>Confer F. Wassermann, "The Melian Dialogue," Transactions of the American Philological Association, LXXVIII (1947), 18-36.



morsels.

Or perhaps we might say in answer to our question on these omissions that Thucydides' critical sense was deficient. It is quite plausible that a man who exercised good judgment in most cases should err in some few, that he should fail to see the relative significance of an occasional recent occurrence.

This answer is possible, but I believe that another is slightly more probable. If we look once more at the three events left out of Thucydides' account, we cannot help noticing that they are all of a type: the transfer of the treasury, a decree touching chiefly on the issue of currency, and a statement of incoming revenues. The very fact that all these omissions touch on money in some form or other, as might be suspected from the nature of our previous inquiry in chapters two through five, might give us a clue to their absence. I say a clue because I do not believe, as Sutherland suggests,<sup>3</sup> that Thucydides' is oblivious of all financial happenings or motives. Thucydides probably omitted them because he felt that his was a primarily military history and that these particular events did not have any bearing on the military; but this answer is not entirely satisfactory. Thucydides at times pays much attention to other small financial details<sup>4</sup> which had even less military relevance

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<sup>3</sup>C. H. V. Sutherland, "Corn and Coin, a Note on Greek Commercial Monopolies," American Journal of Philology, LXIV (1943), 146.

<sup>4</sup>Confer Appendix I.

than these.<sup>5</sup>

We must, unfortunately, content ourselves with this attempt at solution. We can at best surmise Thucydides' subjective reasons, and it is better in such cases not to indulge in literary fantasies in attempting to describe a further resolution than that warranted by the evidence. We may safely say that the historian might have been more accurate, had he set down these events; and he undoubtedly knew them, as would any Athenian citizen who could read the stone tablets set up on the Acropolis. But I hardly believe that we would be justified in saying that he omitted them because they did not fit in with his preconceived apologetic notions.

Can we make any definite conclusions from our present study? Certainly eighty-five percent substantiation from a non-literary field would seem to indicate something. Yet it does not say that

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<sup>5</sup>With regard to these omissions, Gomme in his commentary says (I, 370) that the transfer of the treasury was "a measure which more clearly than any other marked the change from the simple leadership, ἡγεμονία to the rule, ἀρχή, of Athens over the members of the league." Yet he offers no explanation for Thucydides' omission, except that it is consistent with the method in the rest of the work--an unlikely solution, since Thucydides frequently made mention of smaller financial details.

Gomme also calls Thucydides' neglect of the tribute changes in 425 "the strangest of all omissions in Thucydides." (III, 500). But he thinks that this omission may be due to the fact that Thucydides had not returned to Athens between the time of the changes and his exile the next year and may not have been able to obtain any exact figures.

This solution, however, seems inadequate to me. If Thucydides was composing his work after 404--and it seems evident from the text cited earlier that he was--then he would have had access to any such records at Athens. So the difficulty remains.

Thucydides is infallible, simply because we have run across no unresolvable conflict between our two lines of evidence. Our conclusion should lie somewhere in the middle, but, because of the relatively high percentage, more towards the side of his objectivity. It would not be an entirely unfounded supposition were we to state as a result of this excursus that Thucydides was objective in discussing most of the circumstances surrounding the question of the Athenian Empire. We would not wish to canonize the historian, however; for he is by no means perfect. He has been known to omit pertinent data. He has made decided mistakes.<sup>6</sup> And he at times takes little pains to conceal his unqualified admiration for such men as Pericles. But he is, by and large, objective; and, consequently, we can safely and reasonably answer our first question in the affirmative. Thucydides was fundamentally a sound historian, and his literary urge did not run away with him.

The answer to our second question, namely that regarding the necessity in the circumstances attendant on the origin, growth, and continuance of the empire, need not detain us long. As we have previously seen in the first chapter, the type of necessity that the Athenian envoys at Sparta were talking about was scarcely necessity in the strict sense of an unalterable extrinsic determination to one course of action. It was rather pragmatic

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<sup>6</sup>E.g., with regard to the geography of Sphacteria. Confer Gomme's commentary, III, 484.

necessity or expediency, a compulsion induced by motives of fear, honor, and self-interest. This expediency was obviously present throughout the history of the Athenian Empire. It was to the advantage of the Athenians to assume the proffered leadership at the beginning of the confederacy in 478/7. They certainly profited by the military activities of the confederacy, sharing in the spoils along with their fellow members. It was to their interest to keep possible insubordinates in line and to retain their firm hold on the whole confederacy; hence it was decidedly expedient to punish severely such would-be secessionists as the Naxians and the Thasians.

We could review the history of the Empire at length and in great detail, pointing out in each event what was to the advantage of the Athenians. Once they possessed their Empire and even the shadow of a Delian confederacy was at an end, they had aroused the ire of many of their subjects; and they were afraid to let go, as Pericles and the Athenian envoys at Sparta admitted. This was their necessity. It was present throughout the career of the Empire, guiding the hand of the Athenians, directing them in whatever course of action was to their advantage. We may be misled by the terminology, since expediency hardly seems philosophical necessity to us. But, granted the positivist morality expressed already in chapter one as a foundation for the apologia of the Athenians, we cannot gainsay their excuses for tyranny without entering into the philosophical realm and proceeding be-

yond the scope of our thesis. Naturally the Athenians conducted their affairs of government to their own pragmatic advantage, since many of them no longer believed in any other standard of morality. The expediency which guided them was, of course, present in the historical events; and these historical events were faithfully related by Thucydides. And so prescindng from the Athenian deterministic theory of morals, we must pass on their apologia as valid. The expediency or necessity of history was what drove them to take the course of action which they did.

One more question remains to be answered. Did Thucydides agree with the moral criteria that he put into the speeches of his contemporary Athenians? Is the deterministic moral analysis that is historically valid actually his own?

Let us quote a well-known passage from the third book of his history. He is here referring to the difficulties in Corcyra in 427 B.C., and his references to the "code of human nature" are hardly complimentary.

At this crisis, when the life of the city had been thrown into utter confusion, human nature, now triumphant over the laws, and accustomed even in spite of the laws to do wrong, took delight in showing that its passions were ungovernable, that it was stronger than justice and an enemy to all superiority. For surely no man would have put revenge before religion, and gain before innocence of wrong, had not envy swayed him with her blighting power. Indeed, men do not hesitate, when they seek to avenge themselves upon others, to abrogate in advance the common principles observed in such cases--those principles upon which depends every man's own hope of salvation should he himself be overtaken by misfortune--thus failing to leave them in force against the time when perchance a man in peril shall have need of some

one of them.<sup>7</sup>

We would base our whole argument on this citation, extolling as it does the laws of religion and universal charity. But, unhappily textual difficulties enter into consideration here. Nearly all recent critical texts reject this chapter of the third book as spurious, and scholiast traditions going back as far as Dionysius of Halicarnassus support this contention. Suffice it to say that some modern commentators, e.g. Schwartz and Adcock,<sup>8</sup> have accepted the passage; and we wished to cite it here as a point from which to begin our brief argumentation on this matter, rather than as an authority in itself.

Instead we shall base our conclusions on Thucydides' views of morality on a number of other texts, all of which are safe critically. Beginning with the eighty-second and eighty-third chapters of the third book, which immediately precede the passage quoted above, we find much of the same flavor of commentary upon the war morals of the time. Thucydides describes the spirit of revenge and deceit abroad in the city at war; he refers to greed and ambition as the cause of these evils. He bewails the prevalent depravity, the loss of simplicity, which he regards as "the chief element of a noble nature,"<sup>9</sup> and the broken oaths of

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<sup>7</sup>III, 84, 2-3.

<sup>8</sup>Cited in Gomme, II, 383.

<sup>9</sup>III, 83, 1.

statesmen. Though he is explicitly declaiming only on the savagery evident in a city during internal dissension, he implies that these observations belong to all states and individuals in time of war.<sup>10</sup>

We have frequently adverted to the Melian dialogue, that forthright expression of an overweening imperial power. The Athenian speeches throughout this section of the history are couched in terms which leave an unmistakable impression of pride and brutality. They offer the Melians the alternative of becoming imperial subjects of their own accord or of meeting their death under overwhelming forces. And, as sole excuse for this barbarous conduct, the Athenians allege, "For of the gods we hold the belief, and of men we know, that by a necessity of their nature wherever they have power they always rule."<sup>11</sup> And so, presuming on future divine favor in spite of their misdeeds,<sup>12</sup> the Athenians go down to disaster in the Syracusan expedition, which begins in the very next chapter after the close of the Melian episode.

We might say that such crude sentiments seem to be attributed especially to the members of the war party at Athens. All through the fourth and fifth books, Cleon, the leader of this

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<sup>10</sup>III, 82, 3.

<sup>11</sup>v, 105, 2.

<sup>12</sup>v, 105, 1.

party, is portrayed as a vulgar demagogue and an unscrupulous agitator. Then, after his death at Amphipolis, the war party succeeds in violating the truce by attacking Melos in 416 and expressing their contemptuous sentiments as above. Finally, in the sixth book, it is likewise this party, with Alcibiades as prime mover, who convinces the Athenian people of the wisdom of the Sicilian expedition, which finally weakened the power of Athens so seriously that her Aegean subjects could revolt almost with impunity.

On the other hand, Nicias, the leader of the peace party, is generally painted as a virtuous man, though a somewhat irresolute general. He fights doggedly to forestall the sending of the fleet to Sicily; and, when eventually he loses his life in that campaign, he is mourned by Thucydides as "a man who, of all the Hellenes of my time, least deserved to meet with such a calamity, because of his course of life that had been wholly regulated in accordance with virtue."<sup>13</sup> And, as Thucydides himself, admits, Nicias' virtues seem hardly to have been military in character.

On these considerations as well as on those of language employed at other places in the narrative, e.g., when the historian refers to the suppression of the revolt of Naxos as being terminated *κατὰ τὸ καθεστηκός ἐδουλώθη* (scarcely complimentary terms),

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<sup>13</sup>VII, 86, 5.



I would say that Thucydides' sympathies did not lie with the new aggressive morality. Throughout his work he gives the Athenian case a fair hearing, but I do not believe that he agreed with them in principle. Despite his objective portrayal of the new morality, he seems to have preferred the old religious standards.

In conclusion, let us make a few remarks on the significance of this thesis. We do not propose to claim that we have settled without a doubt the problems discussed in the course of these chapters. It would require a doctorate dissertation, for instance, to delve fully into such topics as the deterministic morality or the necessitarian theory of history in the pages of Thucydides; and we have just touched lightly on these questions wherever it has been necessary to bring them into our discussion. But our contact with the non-literary science of numismatics has allowed us to become reasonably sure of Thucydides' objectivity in dealing with the history of the Athenian Empire, in so far as external evidence can tell the story. Our very slight contact with the positivist moral philosophy of the Athenian war party has led us to appreciate their attempted defense of their position on the grounds of historical necessity. And, finally, we have caught a faint glimpse into mind of Thucydides himself on this whole question of morality and history and have seen that his personal views on the matter, while not prejudicing his objective account of the Athenian pride and ruin, seem to lie on the side of the old religious standards of virtue. But it would be foolish to

claim that we have settled these questions beyond the shadow of a doubt. We but point out general tendencies which we think are significant and keep an open mind for the ever-increasing evidence which scholarship is building up in classical fields.

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## APPENDIX I

### THUCYDIDES' INTEREST IN FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

This appendix is not intended to be a polemic. I do not propose to refute Professor Sutherland's views<sup>1</sup> on Thucydides' crass neglect of commercial motives in the Peloponnesian War. I wish merely to state positively certain aspects under which the historian brings up financial matters and to recount briefly some of his more characteristic statements on the subject. Thus this appendix will not be a complete catalogue of all the instances in which Thucydides mentioned anything connected with money; nor will it be a damnation of previous opinions on the subject. It will serve simply as a faint indication that the historian was not entirely ignorant of the important part that finance plays in the waging of any war.

In the quotation from Thucydides cited at the beginning of chapter four, we found Archidamus, the aged Spartan king, saying, "War is not so much a matter of arms as of money . . . ." <sup>2</sup> And, throughout the pages of the history, we find this statement re-echoed countless times. The Trojan war was insignificant, com-

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<sup>1</sup>Confer page 99.

<sup>2</sup>Page 58; I, 83, 2.

pared with the Peloponnesian War, "because of lack of money."<sup>3</sup> Similarly the conflict beginning in 432 was destined to be so great because both Sparta and Athens and their respective allies were at the height of their power, though Thucydides carefully distinguishes between the relative poverty of Sparta financially and the fiscal reserve built up by the Athenians through their system of tribute.<sup>4</sup> Pericles remarks that "it is accumulated wealth . . . that sustains wars."<sup>5</sup> And, for these reasons, the Athenians should have been able to overcome the Spartans.

During the account of the war itself, both sides see that the success of the Athenian cause depends upon the revenues coming regularly from the subject cities of the Empire, as well as from Athens' own silver mines at Laurium.<sup>6</sup> To stop this flow of money, the Spartans fortify Deceleia in 413 and succeed in impoverishing Athens to some extent by cutting off her native supply of silver.<sup>7</sup> In the closing years of the narrative, the Spartans make a treaty with the Persians; and one of the express purposes of the pact is to prevent the tribute money from reaching Athens.<sup>8</sup> These tactics are eventually successful and help

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<sup>3</sup>I, 11, 2.

<sup>4</sup>I, 19; I, 80, 4; I, 85, 1; I, 141, 2-4; I, 142, 1.

<sup>5</sup>I, 141, 5.

<sup>6</sup>II, 13, 2; VII, 19, 1.

<sup>7</sup>VII, 27, 3-5 and 28, 4.

<sup>8</sup>VIII, 18, 1.

considerably toward the downfall of the city at a later date.

As the power of Sparta grows in the years narrated by the eighth book, her resources grow as well. She begins to levy tribute from her followers for the prosecution of the war, even if they are unwilling.<sup>9</sup> And she is soon enriched by assessments which seem to exceed even those of Athens in her prime.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the course of the war, the historian frequently remarks on the relative wealth or poverty of a city. He describes the destitution of the Syracusans under siege at some length.<sup>11</sup> He refers to the opulence of Selinus and Syracuse before the beginning of the Sicilian campaign.<sup>12</sup> The concealed poverty of Segesta<sup>13</sup> is one of the main factors which leads to the vanquishment of the Athenian forces in the West. And, at various times, he mentions the wealth of such peoples as the Carthaginians,<sup>14</sup> the Odrysians,<sup>15</sup> and the colonists at Amphipolis.<sup>16</sup>

Particular sums of money are recorded over twenty times in

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<sup>9</sup>VIII, 3, 1-2.

<sup>10</sup>VIII, 44, 4, where thirty-two talents are taken from Rhodes.

<sup>11</sup>VII, 48, 5.

<sup>12</sup>VI, 20, 4.

<sup>13</sup>VI, 46, 1.

<sup>14</sup>VI, 34, 2.

<sup>15</sup>II, 97, 3.

<sup>16</sup>IV, 108, 1.

the narrative. For example, Thucydides tells us that the first assessed tribute of the Delian confederacy amounted to 460 talents.<sup>17</sup> Then he gives in detail the financial condition of the Athenian treasury in 431, where he lists reserves amounting to 6000 talents in coined silver and numerous other sources of precious metals, such as the temple vessels and the plates on the statue of Athena, on the Acropolis.<sup>18</sup> He notes that 1000 talents of this money was later set aside as an emergency fund.<sup>19</sup> Occasionally too, he gives us exact figures on such events as the siege of Potidaea, which cost 2000 talents,<sup>20</sup> or the property tax of 428, which netted 200 talents.<sup>21</sup> Tiny items of interest are also recorded at times, such as when Brasidas offers thirty silver mnas to the first man to scale the wall of Lecythus<sup>22</sup> or when the Argives ~~amass~~ a popular profit of twenty-five talents from selling the booty taken from the Spartans at Thyreatis.<sup>23</sup>

We have already mentioned the heavy reliance of the Athenians upon the tribute. Thucydides discusses the Athenian tribute

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<sup>17</sup>I, 96, 2.

<sup>18</sup>II, 13, 3-5.

<sup>19</sup>II, 24, 1. The emergency came in VIII, 15, 1.

<sup>20</sup>II, 70, 2.

<sup>21</sup>III, 19, 1.

<sup>22</sup>IV, 116, 2.

<sup>23</sup>VI, 95, 1.

policy in the first book and tells how the main aim of the imperial city is to reduce all their allies to dependent, tribute-paying subjects.<sup>24</sup> Sometimes he descends to such homely details as the ships which sailed around collecting the tribute.<sup>25</sup>

Nor does he neglect the financial status of the individual. He refers to his own right to work the gold mines near Amphipolis.<sup>26</sup> He mentions the great personal wealth of Nicias and the Corinthians' fear that he will bribe his way free.<sup>27</sup> In several instances he tells us that the pay for the average soldier or sailor in Athenian employ was one drachma daily, which was twice the salary of a contemporary juror in the Athenian law courts.<sup>28</sup> He states that the average amount necessary to maintain a warship for a month was one talent.<sup>29</sup> And at least twice he cites the exact amount levied by fine: ten thousand drachmas against King Agis, the unsuccessful Spartan general,<sup>30</sup> and two thousand mnas demanded from the Lacedaemonians for violating Elis during an Olympic truce.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>I, 96, 1; I, 99, 3.

<sup>25</sup>IV, 75.

<sup>26</sup>IV, 105, 1.

<sup>27</sup>VII, 86, 4.

<sup>28</sup>III, 17, 2; VI, 31, 1; VII, 27, 1-2.

<sup>29</sup>VI, 8, 1.

<sup>30</sup>v, 63, 2.

<sup>31</sup>v, 49, 1.

Thucydides even mentions different standards of money. He relates a quarrel between the Persians and the Spartans as to whether the Peloponnesian sailors should be paid one Attic drachma per day.<sup>32</sup> Corinth asks her citizens who wish to make a deposit for one of her colonies, but do not wish to go in person to make a down payment of fifty Corinthian drachmas--hardly a surprising standard.<sup>33</sup> The Athenians are said to have purchased Rhoeteum, a city in Asia Minor, for two thousand Phocaeen staters from the Mitylenian exiles.<sup>34</sup> And the Chians pay the members of the Spartan fleet which have assisted them three Chian tessara--costs per man.<sup>35</sup>

Except for the general statements with regard to the importance of money towards the war effort, many of these citations from Thucydides have little or no significance in themselves. But they do serve to show that the historian was not entirely oblivious of money matters and that, although he may have omitted financial facts from his narrative in which we would be much more interested, this was not done because he had ruled the whole subject of money out of his history. And it is only fair to Thucydides to remark in conclusion that many more sundry examples of financial events could be quoted from the pages of his account.

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<sup>32</sup>VIII, 29, 1.

<sup>33</sup>I, 27, 1.

<sup>34</sup>IV, 52, 3.

<sup>35</sup>VIII, 101, 1.

## APPENDIX II

### MAP OF THE PRINCIPAL STATES OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE MENTIONED BY THUCYDIDES

#### Key:

A	Abydus	N	Eion
B	Acanthus	O	Melos
C	Aegina	P	Mende
D	Amphipolis	Q	Methymna
E	Byzantium	R	Mitylene
F	Carystus	S	Naupactus
G	Chios	T	Naxos
H	Cnidus	U	Potidaea
I	Corcyra	V	Samos
J	Cyme	W	Scione
K	Cythera	X	Scyros
L	Cyzicus	Y	Stagira
M	Delos	Z	Thasos





APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by **John Anthony Brinkman, S.J.** has been read and approved by three members of the Department of **Classical Languages.**

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date

Raymond V. Schoder, S.J.  
Signature of Adviser